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New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 47 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to inform the Assembly that the representatives of Guyana and Peru have requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed yesterday at noon, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of Guyana in the list of speakers? There is no objection. Guyana is therefore included in the list.

May I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of Peru in the list of speakers? There is no objection. Peru is therefore included in the list.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Let me thank you, Sir, and the General Assembly for acceding to our request and our sister delegation of Antigua and Barbuda for allowing us to speak in its stead.

The countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) represented here at the United Nations — Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago — have asked me to place on record our views on item 47 of our agenda, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". I shall do so now as briefly as I can.

We believe that, as evidenced by the several reports and non-papers now before us, the Open-ended Working Group that was tasked with studying the question has made appreciable progress in fulfilling the mandate given to it by resolution 48/26. Over the past two years, Member States have amply ventilated all aspects of the issue. Under the able direction of Mr. Amaral do Freitas's predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, assisted by the indefatigable Vice-Chairman Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland, Ambassador Chew Tai Soo of Singapore and, more latterly, Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand, and of course by our very able Secretariat, we have succeeded in putting forward a number of imaginative and constructive proposals for the Council's reform. It is now possible, we think, to discern an outline of the future shape and functions of this most important organ.

Among the features on which broad agreement now appears to exist are, first, an appropriate increase in the membership of the Council to make it more representative of the enlarged Assembly; secondly, the need for recognition of the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of equitable representation; and thirdly, the desirability of enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of the Council's operation.

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Ideas have not been wanting as to how these desiderata might be achieved. Indeed, there is such a plethora of proposals that it is difficult to reconcile them. However, we cannot and must not accept defeat in this challenge to find common ground.

What is the way forward? CARICOM States do not feel that any useful purpose would be served by retracing terrain already covered. We must now proceed to a more detailed analysis of the various routes that have been suggested in order to determine in which direction we can proceed. Accordingly, our deliberations must now be more focused, with the aim of identifying those proposals that can command consensus. As in the past, the Working Group's bureau and the Secretariat can provide useful guidance on those specific areas upon which concentration must now turn.

Once these have been determined, the Open-ended Working Group should begin to examine each outstanding issue with a view to narrowing differences of position and forging consensus. In the interest of orderly and productive discussion, reasonable time-frames could be set for each issue, allowing, of course, for a return to those on which agreement proves elusive. It would also facilitate our task if the Group's procedures could be made a bit more agile, and flexible enough to provide for a rapid exchange of views rather than a mere repetition of set speeches. This format, we believe, might suffice to encourage and elicit further agreement. If it is felt that this procedure needs to be supplemented by informal consultations, either with regional groups or with like-minded States, CARICOM States would have no objection, provided that the transparency of these consultations and our own participation in them could be guaranteed.

So much for the Working Group's procedures. Let me now quickly address the principal substantive issues which remain to be settled, *inter alia* the means of ensuring equitable representation, the ideal number of members of the Council and the question of the veto.

Although not all are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, CARICOM States find themselves in general agreement with the fundamental thrust of the position enunciated recently at the Movement's eleventh Summit, held in Cartagena, Colombia. As small States in the international community, we attach the highest importance to democracy and equity not only in our own internal affairs but also in our international relations. We will therefore be concerned to see that these principles are taken fully into account in the reform of the Council. Our right to serve on the Council and to make our contribution to the cause of peace must be assured. On these matters there can be no compromise.

In so far as the optimal number of members in any reconstituted Council is concerned, we are willing to show reasonable flexibility. While favouring the middle to upper end in a range of 20 to 30 members, we are not as yet wedded to a precise figure. Our final determination will be made once we are persuaded that the criteria of equitable distribution and the Council's effectiveness have been satisfied. Our sense of equity does not make it easy for us to contemplate additional permanent members, particularly from any one region. However, we will not be averse to considering any formula that offers a feasible balance which does not harm our fundamental principles. Our analysis of the various proposals before us leads us to believe that some accommodation is possible.

An important element in the reform exercise must be, in the view of CARICOM States, the provision of adequate financing arrangements for the Council's operations. As countries with limited resources, we find our mounting peace-keeping assessments quite burdensome. We are therefore prepared to consider, in keeping with the doctrine of common but differentiated responsibilities, the suggestion made for a system to be devised that would make it possible for States that are economically well off to bear a greater share of this burden. Their greater responsibility should of course be recognized by a correspondingly enhanced role on the Council. Some proposals have been made in this regard which merit our close consideration. However, whatever we can agree upon by way of any change in the conditions of membership as they exist now, it must be made clear that privileges cannot be enjoyed without a premium being placed on them.

Finally, inasmuch as the principle of equity makes it difficult for us to accept the concept of permanent membership, we must oppose the power of veto which accompanies this privileged category. We must persevere in our efforts to restrain, modify and ultimately abolish the use of the veto so that more democratic decision-making can prevail in the Council. We support the concrete suggestions made in this regard by members of the Non-Aligned Movement and others, and urge that they be carefully studied with a view to adoption. Moreover, in the quest for the further democratization of the Council we shall seek to forge an even closer relationship between the Council and the General

Assembly, the most representative of our organs, and other relevant bodies such as the International Court of Justice. We welcome the steps that have already been taken to make the operations of the Council more effective and more transparent, and now urge their appropriate institutionalization.

As we now prepare to enter the next and hopefully decisive stage of the Working Group's deliberations, the CARICOM States, for which I have had the honour to speak today, undertake to cooperate fully and in good faith with the President, the Bureau and all Member States to fulfil the mandate of resolution 48/26. With its full and explicit provisions, that resolution should serve as the compass by which we continue to chart our future course. Accordingly, we should adhere as closely as possible to the directions which it gives so that we can bring our task to an early and satisfactory conclusion.

Mr. de Silva (Sri Lanka): While heeding calls for brevity I cannot neglect to express my delegation's thanks to His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire for his guidance of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. Special thanks are due also to the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, for their well documented observations on and assessments of the achievements of the Working Group, which are set out in document A/49/965.

Despite the complexity of issues involved, and the large number of States that have expressed their views on the Security Council, broad agreement is increasingly gathering around certain fundamentals. The need to make the Security Council more democratic in its operation, more representative in its composition, more transparent in its working methods and more effective in its eventual functioning has been accepted by all.

All this bears directly on the composition of the Security Council and the practical application of the principle of the sovereign equality of all States on whose behalf the Council is meant to act. That the Council needs to increase its current membership to better match increases in the number of Members now in the United Nations is obvious. A purely mathematical increase will not achieve much, unless the increase helps redress existing imbalances. The vast majority of States from Asia, Africa and Latin America are grossly underrepresented in the Council. Broad support appears to be growing towards a consensus on enlarging the Council to not more than 26 members. Sri Lanka strongly advocates that during the current session negotiations commence with a view to reaching agreement on such an increase as would ensure that each of the five regional groups have representation proportionate to its numbers rather than a flat one-fifth of the seats in the Council.

The question of permanent members has, for a number of reasons, been the most difficult to resolve, not least because of the vexed issue of the veto. Sri Lanka acknowledges the historical factors underlying Article 23.1 of the Charter. Beyond permanent membership in the Council, the States concerned have seats, in virtual perpetuity, in the Economic and Social Council, in the General Committee of the General Assembly, in the International Court of Justice and in other organs. Sri Lanka believes that in the current context other States, including some Non-Aligned States, can legitimately advance arguments at least as compelling as those advanced in 1945 to claim the special privilege of permanent membership. A sense of realism might perhaps dictate that the present permanent members remain undisturbed, however anachronistic the situation may seem. But any increase in this exalted category should not be to the further detriment of the developing countries.

Proposals have also been made for a new category of members — somewhat less privileged than permanent members, yet somewhat more privileged than the rest, the majority of States. This will only exacerbate matters, diminishing even further the role of the vast majority of States. Practical questions about choosing a new elite of 20 to 30 States would alone render the proposal a daunting one. Sri Lanka is, of course, ready to consider amending Article 23.2 of the Charter to permit re-election to the Security Council of any State which, through the endorsement of its regional group and the support of the general membership, can democratically earn the privilege of continuous terms in the Security Council.

The near-universal interest in revamping the Council comes from the fear of Member States being left out of decisions affecting their vital interests. The Security Council has in the recent past enlarged its area of operations in a significant way. Yet it has increased opportunities for the participation of non-members only in a marginal way. Nevertheless, we welcome these changes as a hopeful beginning. The report of the Working Group, in paragraphs 21 to 30, enumerates a series of measures and practices which have taken account of agitation for a greater role in decision-making in the Security Council for Member States whose interests are directly concerned. A single example where greater involvement by Member States is vital is in respect of Security Council consultative mechanisms before and after sanctions have been imposed. In this regard, we welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General in his "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace". Sri Lanka also draws attention to the proposals relating to cluster II enumerated in the working paper of the Non-Aligned Group, included in document A/49/965.

Finally, Sri Lanka believes that the discussion of Security Council reform we have had over the past two years has not been in vain. We have covered much ground and hardly need to retrace our way. We need now to negotiate agreements on areas where broad understandings are evident; this is particularly so in respect of cluster II issues. On increases in the Council overall, we have similarly come far, when so many views concur on a figure of around 25. The question of permanent membership persists as a difficult one, and we need to concentrate on it. However, a lack of progress on difficult issues should not hold back agreement where possible, say on equitable increases in the category of non-permanent members. The mechanism of the Working Group has served us well, and the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen have been fair and impartial. The next stage, which would involve some negotiations, should continue to be equally open-ended and transparent, permitting all States equal opportunities to participate.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): The twin questions of the enlargement of the Security Council and equitable representation, issues which date their formal emergence as far back as the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, have reached a critical mass. There have been two years of detailed and extensive discussions in the Open-ended Working Group, established during the forty-eighth General Assembly. It is now fair to say that there is a universal consensus on the need to reform and enlarge the Security Council.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to arrive at an agreement on a reform package in time for the fiftieth anniversary, when such an announcement would have been apt, indeed fitting. Substantial differences in views and interests could not be overcome in a timely manner, despite the accumulation of an extensive body of suggestions, observations, facts and, above all, goodwill. What is needed now are concrete conclusions and recommendations embodied in a single negotiating text. As the informative and comprehensive letter to the President of the General Assembly by the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group notes, the groundwork necessary for reform has been laid, and the momentum and energy of the fiftieth anniversary need to be maintained and seized during the current General Assembly session, if we are to avoid a continuance of the inequitable *status quo*. The task of the Working Group must now shift from an exploration of general approaches and views to a refinement of those views, and a follow-up with concrete proposals.

Membership of the United Nations has risen sharply since its founding 50 years ago, particularly from among developing countries. There have also been significant changes in the world's economy and its primary economic players. Neither of these trends have been adequately reflected in the Security Council — certainly not in its permanent membership. For these reasons, a valid case exists for both expanding the Security Council and improving its equitable representation. As it is, the five permanent members represent some 1.75 billion people, while nearly two-thirds of the world is left with no permanent representation. This ratio would not substantially change the existing imbalance if permanent seats were expanded merely by two and other deserving regions or countries were denied the status.

With the Council becoming more actively involved in international peace and security, the need to maintain and strengthen the sense of common purpose and objectives with the general membership, becomes even more critical. Without the active involvement and support of the majority of Members, and not simply a powerful few with global strategic interests, the Council risks diminished relevancy.

Reforming the Council's size, bringing about equitable representation and reforming its working methods were well addressed in the recommendations of the Non-Aligned Movement at its Summit Meetings in Jakarta in 1992 and in Cartagena last October. Statements from Non-Aligned Movement Summits have underscored the imbalance in the Council's permanent membership with regard to non-members and the urgent need to redress it. What is proposed is an expansion of the Council and the creation of additional categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent. There is a particular emphasis on the need for regional representation as a way to ensure that all regions of the world are properly represented.

The Non-Aligned Movement, however, recognizes the difficulty of reaching easy agreement on a reform that can be described as fair and far-reaching. It therefore proposes that expansion should be restricted for the time being to the non-permanent category. Several proposals have been presented to the Open-ended Working Group for restructuring non-permanent membership; they include having regional seats and reclassifying members into groups for designated seats.

One complicating issue in the expansion and reform of the Council is that of the current veto for permanent members. Its purpose no longer exists, and its continuance lacks real justification. Nevertheless, the likelihood of its demise is remote at present so strong consideration must be given to efforts to limit its use, such as requiring two simultaneous vetoes or restricting its use to security matters only. It would also be hardly fair that any new members should fail to enjoy all the rights of existing members, including the veto. That would mean that we would simply be creating a new form of second-class membership, which is certainly not the purpose of this whole exercise.

It is important to realize that at any given moment most States will not be seated on the Council. However, they must be able to remain informed of the Council's activities. Methods for increasing the Council's transparency of its reporting, meetings, consultations and briefings have been well-documented by the Working Group and provide a good basis for reform. The same may be said of a proposal for improving consultations between the Council and the General Assembly, particularly with regional groups, with troop-contributing countries and with other organs of the United Nations system.

Council reform may have reached the point where the gains to be had from further original exploration of the issues will be marginal. If so, we should begin the hard negotiations and consolidation necessary to produce a single negotiating text from the Open-ended Working Group. That would be a fitting achievement for the fiftieth session of the General Assembly to pursue with vigour.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): The United States is pleased to participate in today's debate on agenda item 47, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

The progress of the Working Group has been slow but measurable. This year's progress report stated, *inter alia*, in its conclusions that there is

> "agreement to expand the Security Council and to review its working methods and other matters related to its functioning in a way that further strengthens its capacity and effectiveness, enhances its representative character and improves its working efficiency." (*A/49/47, para. 13*)

While important differences remain, the United States is committed to finding the proper overall package of changes to expand the Security Council. This is an important element in the overall reform process in which the United Nations is now engaged. We believe that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provides a further opportunity to make progress in this reform process.

In this endeavour we have benefited enormously from the role played by our vice co-Chair, the Ambassador of Thailand, whose fair and able leadership and constant engagement, together with that of his equally gifted colleague, the Ambassador of Finland, have helped promote the progress we have made these last 12 months. We look forward to working under the continued guidance of Ambassador Breitenstein and to cooperating with his new co-Vice-Chair. I should also mention in this regard that the United States will oppose any efforts to block the appropriate confirmation of the Bureau of any Working Group.

Strengthening of the Security Council through its careful enlargement is an extremely important step for the United Nations and for its role in global peace and security. The United States position has been consistent throughout this long discussion. We are open to expansion. We support an enlargement which would strengthen the capacity of the Council to shoulder the heavy tasks the global community now gives to it.

In particular, first, we enthusiastically endorse the candidacies of Japan and Germany for permanent membership. Their record of constructive global influence and their capacity to sustain heavy global responsibilities merit the very wide support their candidacies are now receiving. Indeed, the United States could not agree to a Council enlargement that did not result in their permanent membership.

Secondly, there should be no change in the status, powers and obligations of the current permanent members, all of which are countries with global political and economic influence and a capacity to contribute to peace and security by concrete measures on a global basis.

Thirdly, we would support a modest number of additional seats beyond those for Japan and Germany. However, we believe the total size of the Council should not exceed 20.

Fourthly, the scope for the participation of developing countries in the Security Council must be enlarged. In this regard, we believe that the views of the regional groups, including especially the three largest — Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa — should guide the allocation of additional seats for countries in those regions.

We also remain committed to openness, transparency, responsiveness and dialogue between the Security Council and non-members, the issues contained in cluster II of the Working Group's mandate. As is well known, the Council has made important recent progress in these areas, in no small part because of the attention to this subject by the Working Group. But reform should be instructed by experience, not precede it. As we gain experience with recent reforms, we remain open to consideration of other improvements as the need suggests.

Finally, we welcome the interest that the President of the General Assembly has personally taken in the issue of Council expansion and reform, and we feel confident that the Working Group will benefit from his stewardship as its overall Chairman.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon): I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Minister Essy and to the Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand, for their timely and systematic efforts in the tasks of the Open-ended Working Group, whose report is now before the Assembly. Thanks to their perseverance, progress had been made in pinpointing major subjects of discussion and debate. We hope, through our deliberations, to reach a just and even-handed solution to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters.

My delegation shares the opinion that the ongoing discussion on the reform of the Council in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group is essential. It has become clear that there is a need for an expanded Council. We support the approach of seeking an appropriate balance between the need to increase the size of the Council, because of the growth in United Nations membership and the change in the political realities since its inception, and the need for transparency and efficiency in its work. Furthermore, a simple enlargement of the Council by a few seats without appropriate changes in its working methods or procedures will not constitute a lasting solution to the reform question.

We cannot reiterate the arguments of 1945 and apply them to 1995. We are now living in different times. The Council will have to be democratized and restructured in a way that reflects the new realities of the world. At the Cartagena Conference, which represented the views of more than 100 countries, particular stress was laid on the need to democratize the United Nations in a way that reflects the universal vocation of the Organization in fulfilling the principle of the sovereign equality of States. The Security Council is not an international court of justice. It is essentially a political organ, and for this reason we should speed up its democratization process, in full awareness that any reform consecrating the status quo can only be relative.

This is why my delegation believes that the enhancement of the equitable representation and geographic distribution of the non-permanent member seats in the Council is indispensable if reform is to take place, and despite the fact that this would not fundamentally solve the problem of the disparity that will always exist between permanent and non-permanent members. This enhancement is necessary, but not sufficient, and if it is realized in the future, it will not solve the other problems facing us if no overall solution is found. Important differences still exist between States Members of the United Nations, and further in-depth consideration of these issues is essential if we are to reach an agreement.

Additionally, it is very important to bear in mind the direct or indirect consequences that the restructuring of the Security Council will have on the General Assembly. There should be a thorough review of the Council's relations with the General Assembly. We should be aware of this fact and approach the subject from a global perspective in order to achieve our ambitious goal of reform, focusing on ways and means to enhance the democratization process as a way to speed up the search for an acceptable solution to the question under consideration.

We would like to stress in this regard the necessity to study most carefully the several proposals and suggestions put forward by several delegations with a view to strengthening the democratization process in the Security Council, among which is the so-called Italian proposal for rotation. Pragmatism and open-mindedness should help the work of the Group. However, we know that more deliberations are needed in order to reach an acceptable overall solution.

In closing, we would like to reiterate that democratic reform is our ultimate goal. Yet we have to be realistic in our approach so that we are not overwhelmed by our own rhetoric. We are dealing here with a political problem whose outcome will decide whether the reforms will be accomplished or not. We believe that the Open-ended Working Group has made progress, but unfortunately, not to the extent of achieving a breakthrough. Without a doubt, taboos which used to hamper our discussions have been seriously eroded, but not to the point of finding a solution acceptable to all. This is why we should persevere patiently in our discussions, which reflect the changes of recent decades and the need to act correspondingly.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) *(interpretation from French)*: Allow me at the outset to pay tribute to Mr. Amara Essy, President of the General Assembly at its last session, for his wise guidance of the work of the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, as well as other matters related to the Security Council.

I should also like to say how very grateful we are to Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand — whose departure we shall very much regret — for their patience and perseverance throughout this endeavour. We are confident that Mr. Breitenstein, with his experience and great skill, will continue to serve the Working Group until it has successfully concluded its work.

President Freitas do Amaral's decision to preside personally over the work of the Group reflects the interest of the international community as a whole in reforming a body that should respond to the exigencies of a world undergoing sweeping changes.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations affords us an opportunity to commit the Organization resolutely to a process of renewal and revitalization so that it will be able to respond to the new challenges it faces on the eve of the twenty-first century. The subject before us today constitutes a part of the reflection process that has begun on the reform of the Organization. On the agenda of the General Assembly since its thirty-fourth session, the issue did not really gain momentum until the creation in 1993 of a Working Group; the next year, its mandate was extended.

The report before us on the work of that Group emphasizes the richness of the debate on this question at the forty-ninth session when many proposals surfaced. It brings out the fact that agreement was reached on the need to increase the number of members of the Security Council and to take a fresh look at its working methods and other issues related to its functioning, in order to enhance its effectiveness and representativeness.

I wish to associate myself fully with the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the non-aligned countries, and I should like to share some of my own thoughts with the Assembly.

Any reform of the Security Council should be guided by the principles of democratization, sovereign equality of countries and equitable geographic distribution.

It should involve a revision of the composition and size of the Security Council, as well as of its practices and working methods, two aspects that are complementary.

The revision of the composition and size of the Security Council, affecting permanent and non-permanent members alike, is imperative given the new global economic and political realities. In the light of these new realities, Japan and Germany are claiming — understandably so — a permanent seat. These same realities entitle the developing countries to their proper place in the Council, a place justified by the part they play in international affairs. This restructuring must be undertaken in a spirit of democratization and legitimization so as to correct the regional imbalance within that body.

Three regions are inadequately represented in the Security Council. In that light, Africa, which represents a third of the world's population and accounts for the majority of States Members of the Organization, should be granted two permanent seats. Those seats would be assigned on the basis of a system of rotation and according to criteria established by the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council must be based solely on the criteria spelt out by the Charter, namely, contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, along with equitable geographic representation.

We stand convinced that the time has come to consider at least the regulation, if not the elimination, of the veto. If the veto is retained, it should be granted to the new permanent members. Regulating this power would consist of limiting its use. Its exercise could, for instance, be limited to decisions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter. A double veto would be required to block any decision.

Improving the Council's functioning and methods of work reflects a desire for effectiveness and transparency. The efforts made by the Security Council in this realm, as evidenced by the recent adoption of certain measures, should be pursued. The strengthening of cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly, whose role in the maintenance of international peace and security is recognized by the Charter, would ensure the full support of the States Members of the Organization for Security Council decisions. This applies also to cooperation with countries that are not members of the Security Council. The practice of holding consultations with troop-contributing countries should be expanded, in accordance with Article 50, to cover situations in which the Security Council orders economic sanctions against a State.

To be sure, some progress has been made. None the less, major differences remain as to substantive issues. For that reason, we support the Working Group's recommendation that its mandate should be renewed for the fiftieth session and that it should report to the General Assembly before the end of that session. While it may be unrealistic to set a deadline for completing the work in question, it is, however, possible to arrive, within a reasonably short time, at encouraging results. Now that the positions of most of the parties have been aired extensively, we should engage in genuine negotiations on contentious issues and, in a spirit of compromise and prompted by a desire for justice, fairness and realism, try to move the process forward in the desired direction.

The restructuring of the Security Council is one of the major focal points of the efforts to reform the Organization, a reform that must be based on the principles of democratization, representativeness and transparency.

Mr. Guardigli (San Marino) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of the Republic of San Marino has actively participated in the work of the ad hoc group for the reform of the Security Council. We believe that this question is of crucial importance for all countries, in particular the smallest ones, whose independence and sovereignty are guaranteed by the Security Council.

The Republic of San Marino is a country where ancient and deeply rooted principles of freedom and democracy hold sway. We are therefore particularly sensitive to the need to ensure democratic principles, not only within each State but also within the international community, and in particular within the great family of the United Nations, to which we are proud to belong. Thus we are convinced that democracy should be one of the major principles of the process under way for the reform of the Security Council.

On the eve of a new millennium, we need a more democratic and more open Security Council, one that would be more sensitive to the requirements of all the States Members of the United Nations and more transparent in its methods of work.

During the three years that have elapsed since it joined the United Nations, the Republic of San Marino has always paid the closest of attention to the shared interests and needs of all the small States, and it believes that their voice must be heard in all forums, including the Security Council.

In this context, the Republic of San Marino hopes that a democratic formula for rotation within the Security Council will emerge so that all countries, including the smallest ones, are given a genuine opportunity to participate periodically in the work of the Security Council. Only in this manner will all countries be in a position to champion their own individual approaches to international problems, within an Organization that itself represents the highest guarantee of the defence of their vital interests.

This is why the Republic of San Marino would like to support the Italian proposal, which, in its view, represents a good starting point for further in-depth study of the issue.

Mr. Biegman (Netherlands): Let me first express my sincere appreciation for the efficient, constructive and impartial leadership shown by the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, Ambassadors

Breitenstein and Pibulsonggram. I am sad that Ambassador Pibulsonggram will soon leave us, but I very much hope that Ambassador Breitenstein will be willing to stay on.

With regard to the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, I feel that we have come to a point where the general exchange of views has very nearly been exhausted. An in-depth discussion of more concrete reform proposals will have to be the next stage in the process. To find a consensus, compromises will no doubt have to be made. This will not be possible without sacrificing certain national interests for the sake of the overall and global interest of enabling the United Nations to be prepared for the challenges of the future.

The Netherlands, for its part, remains willing to consider any formula that will reconcile efficiency and representativity. We are still of the opinion that Germany and Japan, second and third contributors to our cash-starved Organization, deserve a permanent seat. We also feel that a modus has to be found to ensure the proper representation on the Security Council of Asia, Africa and Latin America. I hope that during the fiftieth session creative thinking will make some progress possible in this difficult terrain.

Still, my delegation is not over-optimistic that agreement on the expansion of the Council will be reached soon. We do not see, however, why progress in cluster II should have to wait because of a lack of consensus on cluster I. I will therefore focus my intervention today on the transparency and working methods of the Council. Important changes in this field are desirable and can be made without changing the United Nations Charter.

There is general agreement that the role of the Security Council gained considerable importance after the end of the cold war. At the same time, we saw that the acceptability and credibility of the Council's decisions were increasingly subject to criticism, not only by public opinion but also by Members of the United Nations itself. One of the lessons to be learned from recent experience is that mandates of the Security Council for peace-keeping operations must be realistic and feasible. Calamities such as occurred in Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrate that the operational aspects of the Council's resolutions need a solid foundation in military planning and available capabilities. At the same time, it is important that there be sufficient political will to use those capabilities when needed. Therefore, in the future, no mandates should be given before the means and the readiness for implementation are assured.

At the same time, it has become clear that the Council can no longer operate behind closed doors, as an exclusive club. Trust and confidence in the decision-making process of the Council require a maximum of openness, transparency and coordination between the Council and the non-members. If these qualities are lacking, decision-making loses weight and value. The Council can carry out its crucial task effectively only if the entire membership of the United Nations feels committed to supporting and executing consistently the decisions of the Council. In order to realize this aim, the Security Council should be made more responsive to the views of the United Nations membership at large.

My country has been an active troop contributor in many peace-keeping operations. Our commitment to contributing troops to operations mandated by the Security Council is unchanged, but there is discomfort with the fact that the influence of most troop-contributing countries on the decision-making process in the Council remains marginal. Article 44 of the Charter sets out the important principle that the Security Council

> "shall, before calling upon a Member not represented on it to provide armed forces in fulfilment of the obligations assumed under Article 43, invite that Member, if the Member so desires, to participate in the decisions of the Security Council concerning the employment of contingents of that Member's armed forces."

I know that Article 43 has never been implemented; neither has Article 44. Nevertheless, there is no doubt about the spirit of the Charter and the intention of its drafters. Troop-contributing countries are entitled to be involved in the decision-making process in the Council when it can affect their troops on the ground.

The present situation is hardly in accordance with this. We have seen that the effect of changes in the mandate of a peace-keeping operation can have grave consequences for United Nations troops on the ground. But troop-contributing countries have no say if the Council decides on such a change of mandate. This amounts to a kind of taxation without representation, and can be detrimental to the political commitment of actual and potential troop contributors.

On 8 March 1995, before the Open-Ended Working Group, I suggested a number of measures that could lead to an improvement in the transparency and working methods of the Council: first, institutionalizing the existing practice of regular consultations between the presidency of the Council and the general membership; secondly, institutionalizing the existing practice of conducting regular consultations between the presidency of the Council and Member States on the Council's programme of work, and giving these briefings the maximum substance possible; thirdly, implementing the intention mentioned in the statement of 16 December 1994 of the Security Council itself to hold more open meetings of the Council, and, especially, implementing the suggestion by the Council in that statement for the holding of what was called "orientation debates"; fourthly, enhancing the process of consultations between the Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries on current peace-keeping operations, including consultation at an early stage on issues such as the content, duration, and change in or termination of a mandate — we call for the formalization of meaningful discussions on all aspects of peace operations between the Council and troop contributors and are prepared to participate actively in endeavours aimed at the establishment of workable mechanisms in this regard; fifthly, making available to the general membership, to the extent possible, information provided by the Secretariat to the Council; and sixthly, and lastly, improving the quality of the annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and including therein an evaluation of the Council's activities over the last year — more analysis, evaluation and reflection on lessons learned would enhance the value of this report, which so far, has been no more than a factual summing up of the activities of the Council during the last year; this would also lead to a meaningful discussion of the report in the General Assembly.

If I repeat these points here today — and I am sorry if I have been a bit long — it is because relatively little progress has been made since 8 March 1995. For example, the promising idea of holding those "orientation debates" mentioned in the statement of the Council of 16 December 1994 has not been translated into established practice. I would therefore like to use this opportunity to call for revitalized attention to the need to improve the transparency of the Council's working methods.

Members can count on the continuing cooperation of my delegation in the search for lasting, equitable and fair solutions which strengthen the Security Council in carrying out its important and challenging task in an ever more complex world. In the consideration of this agenda item, my country will continue to be guided by the desire to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and credibility of the Security Council's work. Increasing the Council's transparency seems to be one area where progress could be made in the foreseeable future.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Our discussion of this important item comes on the heels of another phase of intensive discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. The report that the Working Group submitted to the General Assembly at its last session contains useful information although it included no recommendations on the substantive issues that were discussed.

Today, at the beginning of a new attempt to reach a successful conclusion on the question of an increase in the membership of the Council and of Council reform, my country's delegation wishes to extend its thanks to Mr. Amara Essy, Chairman of the Working Group at the last session of the General Assembly, and to the two Vice-Chairmen, the representatives of Thailand and of Finland, for the skill with which they conducted the affairs of the Group, and especially for their honest assessment — contained in document A/49/965 — of the Group's activities last year.

The representative of Colombia spoke on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation fully supports his statement, which honestly reflects the position of the Non-Aligned Movement — as stated, initially, at the Jakarta summit and at the subsequent ministerial conferences, and as recently confirmed at the eleventh summit, in Cartagena.

As delegations may know, the views of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on this item have been detailed at previous sessions of the General Assembly and at meetings of the Open-ended Working Group. However, in view of the importance of the question under discussion, we feel it is necessary to underscore once again the points previously made by our delegation.

Many proposals on the question of increasing the membership of the Security Council have been put forward. My delegation supports any increase proportionate to the large increase in the membership of the United Nations. In this respect, the Non-Aligned Movement has put forward a constructive proposal, which we believe should be taken into consideration.

From our point of view, equitable geographical distribution in the composition of the Security Council should be given the same priority. The current situation over-represents certain regions, while some other regions are under-represented. This runs counter to the provisions of the Charter, specifically those of article 23 thereof.

With regard to the question of membership categories, my delegation believes that the number of non-permanent members should be increased but does not think that there is any need for new permanent members — something that would simply perpetuate the discrimination between Members of the United Nations. If, however, it were decided that there was a real need to increase the number of permanent members, this should not be predetermined on the pretext of easing the financial burdens on permanent members.

The principle of equitable geographical distribution should also be applied in the selection of members in this category. In addition, special consideration should be given to regions that are under-represented, or are not represented at all, in the category, as in the case of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. We believe that new permanent members should be selected not on the basis of who is bigger or stronger but on the basis of regional perspective, in accordance with procedures to be agreed upon in each region.

Increasing membership of the Security Council is a requirement that is made imperative by several factors, especially by the fact that membership of the United Nations has increased dramatically since the last expansion of the Council. In addition, my delegation wishes to confirm once again its conviction that mere change in the Council's composition will not be sufficient unless such change is accompanied by drastic changes in the Council's methods of work. As is well known, several proposals along these lines have been put forward. Some of them have been put into effect by the Council, while others have not.

Let me put some of the many questions that have thus been raised. How long should Members of the United Nations wait for the Security Council to put into effect one of their demands — namely, that the Council hold more formal meetings and, thereby, allow all Member States to express their views and explain their positions on the issues under consideration? Till when will the decision-making process in the Council remain constricted in a manner that gives the impression that one single State or a few permanent members control decision-making? Why does the Council limit its consultations to countries that contribute troops to peace-keeping operations, without listening to the views of other countries concerned with matters under consideration in the Council? Lastly, when will certain members of the Council stop ignoring the positions of a number of other members, as has happened on several occasions, especially during periodic reviews of the sanctions regimes?

My delegation is fully confident that many other delegations, including those of countries that are members of the Security Council, are asking the selfsame questions that we have raised. Some of those delegations have actually asked those questions, even if they did so in different language. In our estimation, the Security Council could best respond by putting into effect the proposed improvements. The problem is that certain members of the Council do not want any reform. They want simply to retain the considerable clout they now have.

Notwithstanding, we remain hopeful that the will of the majority will prevail and will lead to the adoption of measures that would enable the Council to work in a democratic and transparent fashion and ensure that it establishes sound relations with other organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly. The Council should be accountable to the Assembly as the sole body where all Member States enjoy full equality.

With regard to the reform process, my delegation deems it essential for the Security Council to be neutral, to steer clear of policies based on double standards and to remember at all times that, it works on behalf of all Members of the United Nations and is not their guardian. The Council should perform its duties in accordance with the Charter. It should never encroach on the functions of other bodies, such as the International Court of Justice.

Members of the Security Council should be vigilant and should ensure that no country is allowed to impose its wishes on the Council. It should be made impossible for any country to use the Council to serve its own purposes and to implement its designs, as happened in the past when certain countries managed to use the Council as a tool to punish a number of countries, especially small nations, by imposing sanctions on them, before exhausting peaceful measures, as provided for in the United Nations Charter.

My country has opposed the veto power. In fact, Libya was the first to call for the abolition of this privilege because it is convinced that the circumstances in which it was granted no longer exist and that there is therefore no justification for its continuance.

We were told and continue to be told that the veto power was granted to certain countries with greater responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security. Here we should like to ask: Is not the continued colonization of peoples a factor that threatens international peace? The answer is clear. If such is the case, it is a contradiction in terms to give the veto privilege to countries that continue to colonize other peoples, as in Guam, the Virgin Islands, the Malvinas Islands, Gibraltar, New Caledonia, Réunion and Mayotte.

We are told also that shouldering a greater financial burden in the work of the United Nations is a criterion for permanent membership. Here, we should like to ask how could such a criterion apply to a country whose arrears in the United Nations budget, including the costs of peace-keeping operations, now exceed one billion dollars?

Is it not also an injustice that the veto power should continue to be valid even when it is used to consecrate acts of aggression, as happened 10 years ago, when it was used by a country that enjoys the privilege in trying to avoid condemnation for a treacherous military, air and naval attack against my country in the course of which hundreds of innocent people were killed and injured? Later, it was discovered that the pretext which was used to justify the attack had no foundation in actual fact. Presently, that same country is actively rejecting any solution for what has come to be known as the Lockerbie incident. In so doing, it depends on its veto power which it threatens to use against any endeavour to lift the sanctions it pushed the Security Council to impose on my country under fabricated arguments and on the force of false accusations.

The fact is that the victors of 1945 granted themselves special privileges. But the United Nations today is not what it was five decades ago. The most important aspect of the change that has taken place is the fact that most of the countries that are now represented in this Assembly were not Members of the Organization at the time and did not have any say in granting any of the privileges that were granted to five countries. All of this leads us to one conclusion: the veto power must be abolished.

In addition to the many valid justifications put forward in support of this view there are other good grounds for abolishing the privilege, including the fact that the veto power runs counter to justice and to the noble principles of the Charter, the first principle of which is the full sovereign equality of States. It also contradicts the values and undermines the principles of democracy. Moreover, it is no longer acceptable that certain countries should enjoy a privilege which they abuse in order to perpetuate their hegemony over the fate of the world, to eternalize their hold over the process of international decision-making and to eternalize a prerogative that calls to mind the divine right kings arrogated to themselves in the Middle Ages.

Shortly, the Open-ended Working Group will be carrying out its work under the wise leadership of the President of the General Assembly, with the capable assistance of his two Vice-Presidents. We hope that the views put forward by Member States at this session and during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will give new impetus to the work of the Working Group and make it able to quickly and successfully to accomplish its task.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, it gives me great pleasure to convey to the President of the General Assembly the special appreciation of the delegation of Egypt for the effective manner in which he has been conducting the work of the Assembly since the beginning of the fiftieth session. He has demonstrated the outstanding leadership and diplomatic skills of which we are all aware. It also gives me great pleasure sincerely to thank the two Vice-Presidents, who have carried out their tasks with great competence.

During the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters was characterized by objectivity and intellectual depth. Its deliberations have entered a new phase which transcends the delivery of abstract and generalized laudatory statements to the expression of concrete ideas. This has led to an important clarification of the major issues involved, even if it has not yet led to actual negotiation on a definitive text that would serve as a basis for amending the Charter.

If we look at the current balance sheet, we find that while the need to discuss these matters was itself put into question at the first session of the Working Group, agreement now exists on the need for an increase in the membership of the Council and for reviewing its methods of work and the procedures it follows in carrying out its functions. The discussion has also highlighted a number of principles that could serve as guidelines in the pursuit of equitable representation and increase in the Council's membership. These principles include equal sovereignty among States, equitable geographical representation and the extent of participation in the maintenance of international peace and security. There is also a clearly perceived need for any change to include enhanced transparency, efficacy and democracy in the Council's work.

The two clusters prepared by the two Chairmen of the Working Group on the most important issues to be discussed have been instrumental in focusing discussion on the most important issues and have afforded the opportunity of studying them in-depth at the level of States and of regional groups. In this regard, Egypt, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, has presented a paper that defined the general framework of the States members of the Movement and clearly outlined their position on many of the issues relating to increasing the Council's membership and developing its performance.

I wish to state that Egypt supports the statement of the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, since our position is based on the following:

First, any increase in the Council's membership must be based on the principles of equitable geographical distribution and sovereign equality among States, with a view to imbuing the work of the Council with greater legitimacy and credibility. Secondly, there is a need to address the imbalance caused by the under-representation of the Non-Aligned Movement in the Security Council. Thirdly, it is important to undertake a periodic review of the questions agreed upon. Fourthly, there is a need to review the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, the general membership of the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, with a view to enhancing the transparency of the Council's work and the participation of non-member States in decision-making. Fifthly, the Working Group must address in a parallel and interconnected manner the questions of increase in membership and development of the Council's work and accord them the same degree of attention.

The increase in the membership of the Security Council should not lead to an increase in the number of permanent seats for developed States at the expense of the developing countries. What is needed now is creating the desired balance in the Council's composition.

This will be achieved only through the addition of a number of developing States whose ability to shoulder their new responsibilities has been demonstrated through the contributions they have made and the role they have played at the regional and international levels.

As my Foreign Minister said earlier this session, Egypt's role, *inter alia* in the Arab, African, Middle Eastern and non-aligned frameworks, and its continued international contribution in support of United Nations activities, qualify it to shoulder its responsibilities in a new Security Council with an increased membership and balanced representation of all regions.

We turn next to the optimal method for agreeing on criteria for increasing the Council's membership. The delegation of Egypt considers that this requires us to be absolutely realistic so that we may accurately reflect the realities of our contemporary world. There are certain States that perform an active international role and there are others that bear a burden of regional responsibilities which varies from one region to the other. At the same time, due account must be taken of the principle of sovereign equality to ensure that there are equal opportunities to attain membership of a new Security Council in a democratic framework.

In the light of the foregoing, the delegation of Egypt considers that applying the criterion of realism requires discussion of the views concerning the addition of a number of seats to be rotated among a certain number of States from each region. Such ideas afford a larger number of Member States the opportunity of sharing the responsibilities of Council membership in rotation, in every region and thereby consolidate the Council's role and reaffirm its credibility.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the creation of additional permanent seats in the Council runs into two obstacles that are not easily surmountable. The first relates to the negative effects on the work of the Council that would result from increasing the number of Members with the right of veto; a subject I shall return to presently. The second concerns the many difficulties that stand in the way of reaching agreement on third-world States that would be given permanent seats in the Council, especially in view of the diversity of situations, characteristics and political circumstances in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In view of all this, it would be more to the point, both in terms of logic and in practical terms, to focus, in the next phase, on exploring the range of ideas submitted by certain States, such as Italy and Australia, on developing a new method for selecting certain States on the basis of their regional weight and on giving them special responsibilities, with a view to developing further such ideas and building on them so that they may accurately reflect contemporary realities.

With respect to the working methods of the Security Council, my delegation affirms that this process should include a review of the Council's decision-making process. Experience has shown that there is a growing need to broaden the base of consultation between the Council and the concerned States in the region where the events take place. The Charter calls upon the Council to undertake consultations with States non-members of the Council in two specific situations: under Article 44, if the non-member is a contributor of troops to a peace-keeping operation authorized by the Council, as mentioned today by the representative of the Netherlands; and under Article 50, if a State finds itself confronted with special economic problems arising from measures taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII.

My delegation finds it important that the scope of the consultations the Council is supposed to conduct with States non-members should not be limited to the events themselves, but should be extended to the phase preceding the adoption of a resolution and to include regional organizations. Moreover, consultations should continue after the adoption of the resolution, especially if it involves the deployment of United Nations forces for peace-keeping or peace-building.

It is not possible to speak of measures to develop the Security Council without touching on the Council's voting system, a system that has yet to reach completion owing to the fact that it has not been possible to agree on clear criteria for distinguishing the substantive from the procedural in matters that are put to the Council. The delegation of Egypt considers that, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Council, it is necessary that the scope and limits of the veto power should be defined, either by amending the Charter or by updating the provisional rules of procedure of the Council and making them permanent.

In that connection, the firm position of the Non-Aligned Movement is that the right of veto must be reviewed, a position that Egypt has held since the San Francisco Conference. Members know that the provisions of Article 27 of the Charter differentiate between procedural and all other matters without stating clearly what is meant by each term. The five permanent members have tried to impose their own exhaustive interpretation, set out at the San Francisco Conference in a document of 7 June 1945, known as the "San Francisco Statement". However, the Conference did not endorse that document, and all attempts to include its content in the Council's first rules of procedure have failed. Continued disagreement on the matters that should or should not fall within the scope of the veto had the result of making the Council's rules of procedure "provisional", to this day.

We are all aware of the adverse effects on the work and the credibility of the Council of the abuse of the veto power in an earlier period. We also know that the right of veto continues to be used covertly: the veto is threatened with a view to changing the contents of some draft resolutions.

In the light of the foregoing, the delegation of Egypt considers it necessary to stress a number of points:

First, there is no definite, agreed and unambiguous legal definition of the matters to which the veto applies. Adherence to the San Francisco Statement in this respect opens the door to the unrestricted use of the veto, as the Statement was based on the concept of the "chain of events", by which the scope of applicability of the veto can be expanded infinitely.

Secondly, analysis of the Council's practice in distinguishing the substantive from the procedural in the issues it deals with shows that in many cases the Council has defined such matters on the basis of the provisions of the San Francisco Statement, even though the Statement lacks any legal basis, not having been adopted by the San Francisco Conference and not having been incorporated into the provisional rules of procedure. In addition, those provisions run counter to sound logic and lack in clarity, which can only lead to arbitrary interpretations of the provisions of the Charter. So long as the definition of the scope of the veto remains unclear, it will be unacceptable to grant such broad undefined powers to any other member.

The work of the Working Group during the previous session has underscored a number of basic ideas, without which it would have been difficult to complete the negotiations. I find it important, before concluding my statement, to commend once again the continued constructive efforts made by the two Vice-Chairmen, the ambassadors of Finland and Thailand. My delegation will continue its contribution and cooperation with them, and with the other delegations within the Working Group to achieve further progress on this significant and vital question, during the current session.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): From the very start, I wish to state that my delegation fully supports the statement earlier made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement relative to this very important item on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. My delegation would also like to commend the Co-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group for the able manner in which the deliberations in that Group have been conducted over the last two years.

When the General Assembly decided to appoint the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation On and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, it was with a view to redressing the imbalances in the current membership of the Security Council and taking into account the representations from the overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership.

Since the commencement of deliberations on these important matters, some reforms in the working methods of the Security Council have occurred. My delegation welcomes the now regular consultations between the Council and troop contributors. We also welcome the briefings by the President of the Security Council of the membership of the United Nations at large. These initiatives, although only tentative, are nevertheless going some way towards the ultimate objective of ensuring that the Security Council is transparent, democratic and accountable.

However, as regards the main reform — namely, the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council — a lot of work remains to be done. Indeed, very little, if anything, has been achieved, as evidenced by the report of the Open-ended Working Group.

It is agreed that the Security Council is in need of expansion to reflect the rise and diversity in the membership of the United Nations. The general membership of the United Nations has grown from 51 members in 1945 to 185 today. For this reason, the legitimacy of the Security Council's speaking and acting on behalf of the whole membership will remain a sham unless fundamental change occurs to guarantee equitable and fair representation on the Security Council in line with present-day realities in the world.

My delegation is of the view that there is a need to accelerate the reform process, lest we lose the momentum. Let us not be parochial in our approach to these reforms. The Security Council reforms needed to prepare the United Nations to face the challenges of the twenty-first century must be broad-based, bold and not piecemeal, based on the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States, and the equitable and geographical distribution of seats. These fundamental principles are enshrined in the Charter and must serve as a basic reference point for reforming the Security Council.

As my President said when addressing the United Nations fiftieth anniversary Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on 22 October 1995:

> "The Security Council especially … can no longer be maintained as a sanctuary of the holy of holies, with only the original members acting as high priests and deciding on issues for the rest of the world, which cannot be admitted. Broader and geographical representation is the answer." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 35th Meeting, p. 11)*

When we consider either the permanent seats or the non-permanent seats on the Security Council, due regard should be paid to redressing the imbalances in the current membership of the Security Council. The reforms should be in the spirit of genuinely representative democracy and good governance, which the United Nations embodies and personifies. My delegation also believes that those who urge democratization at the national level should, in fact, be in the forefront of the efforts to democratize international institutions, including democratic reform of the Security Council itself.

In the current composition of the Security Council, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean are not adequately represented. It is the view of my delegation that any reform of the Council must therefore redress this imbalance.

My delegation is willing to work with all the delegations genuinely working for Security Council reforms. Let us not procrastinate — the United Nations and the Security Council, in particular, need the reforms. Let us galvanize our political will for reform now.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): Before I make my statement on this subject, allow me to present this quotation:

> "According to the Holy Book, it is said: Those who labour to build the house labour in vain if God is not part of the exercise."

We are here today, bringing all our efforts together to restructure the Security Council. But I have these questions: How many times do we ever invite God to come and intervene in the problems that beset the United Nations? Are we not yet aware that if problems are plaguing the United Nations it is because we have forsaken God? For instance, we hardly pray in this plenary Hall. We hardly invite God into this plenary Hall. Do we think we are wise enough to solve our own problems? This is a message to you, Sir — share it with all the authorities of the United Nations.

I am once again honoured to address the General Assembly for and on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland. I wish to add the voice of my country to the already swelling chorus of views stated by other Member States on the crucial question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. Needless to say, my delegation attaches significance to this item.

Reeling from the shock of the Second World War, with its unparalleled suffering to mankind, the founding fathers of the United Nations Charter established the Security Council as one of the principal organs of the United Nations. It was charged with the awesome duty of maintaining peace and international security and ensuring that the events leading to, and the happenings of, the Second World War do not recur.

Many significant changes have taken place since the formation of the Security Council, most notably the increase in the membership of the United Nations and the end of the cold war. The question that arises in the light of these and other changes is: can we maintain the status quo in the Security Council and at the same time ensure that it reflects contemporary realities?

My answer is in the negative. There is an obvious need to review the structure, composition and functioning of the Council in order to enable it to carry out the work and the duties of the times in which we live and which we can see unfolding into the twenty-first century.

I shall now venture to identify issues which constitute areas of major concern to my delegation.

The first is permanency in the Security Council. My delegation is of the view that permanent membership of the Security Council needs serious revisitation. We are the first to recognize the importance of, and the idea behind, permanent membership of the Security Council at the time it was created. It would appear, however, that the motivation behind permanent membership has been overtaken by recent events, and certain questions naturally come to mind. Is permanent membership a necessary feature of the Security Council today? If the answer is in the affirmative, is there not a need to review the criteria for permanent candidature *vis-à-vis* the principle of equality of States as enshrined in the Charter? Is it justifiable to maintain the present membership in the Security Council in the light of the fact that some members of the permanent five do not maintain a distinguished record on contributions to the work of the United Nations, including contributions to voluntary funds and programmes?

I now turn to use of the power of the veto. This issue is inextricably linked with the previous one. In the light of changing international circumstances, the Swaziland delegation is of the firm view that the veto has since become anachronistic and should be abolished, since it reduces the principle of equality of States and elementary principles of democracy to a mere shibboleth.

As regards an increase in membership of the Security Council, my delegation is of the considered view that the present quota of members is sufficient to carry out the functions of the Council effectively. There is therefore no need to interfere with the number of members, remembering the adage "Too many cooks spoil the broth".

On the question of equitable geographic representation, without prejudice to our position on the need to maintain permanent membership in the Security Council as already stated, we support the view that the principle of equitable geographic representation must be strictly observed in both categories of membership in the Security Council. This will, in our opinion, enhance the credibility of the Security Council, and will make it more representative and democratic.

On the subject of accountability, the Swaziland delegation notes with concern that there is a relative paucity of communication between the Security Council and the General Assembly. This results in the General Assembly being unaware of the activities of the Security Council, even in matters in which there is no urgency to justify prompt action by the Security Council.

We therefore appeal to the General Assembly to devise ways and means to ensure that the Council reports fully and promptly as required by Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. Such measures will promote transparency in the work of the Security Council.

Last but not least, I would like to make an appeal to Member States: it is our collective responsibility to fashion the entire United Nations system in a manner that will reflect the noble ideals of the founding fathers and at the same time take full account of the ever-changing circumstances and realities of our world today. Some people set goals and others achieve those goals. Let us move forward and interpret the ideals of the founding fathers so that they become a reality.

In conclusion, I have listened to all the preceding speakers but none has mentioned representation of my continent — Africa — in the Security Council. Is it not yet another step and attitude to marginalize Africa? If the argument is that Africa is a poor continent I repeat that there are members of the Security Council today that are poor, but they are permanent and they are there. They can hardly contribute to peace-keeping, let alone to the developing nations, including my continent, Africa. I therefore strongly argue, and we should let it dawn in our minds, that the time has come to realize that Africa should have a permanent member in the Security Council, whether or not Africa is poor. We were created by God and no one should marginalize us.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): The fact that nearly one third of the membership of the United Nations has decided to participate in the discussion on this agenda item speaks for itself. There is probably no issue more important and vital for our Organization and for its Member States than the "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". The effective and efficient reform of the United Nations and its revitalization seem impossible without adequate changes which reflect present-day realities in the composition and activities of one of the Organization's principal organs, the Security Council.

But today I am speaking to the Assembly with mixed feelings. On the one hand, the Heads of State and Government voiced their almost unanimous support for the expansion of the Security Council, seeing this as an essential prerequisite for making the Council more democratic, more representative, more transparent and more accountable to the General Assembly. The delegation of Ukraine completely shares the idea, reflected in the Declaration on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, that

> "The Security Council should, *inter alia*, be expanded and its working methods continue to be reviewed in a way that will further strengthen its capacity and effectiveness, enhance its representative character and improve its working efficiency and transparency". *(A/50/48, para. 14)*

On the other hand, we have to admit that two years of intensive diplomatic consultations did not bring us closer to the resolution of this rather important issue. Moreover, the positions of some Member States became even more polarized. To our regret, we cannot but agree with the conclusion drawn in the report of the Working Group to the General Assembly that "important differences continue to exist on key issues". (A/49/47, para. 16) The delegation of Ukraine hopes that the political will that has been so explicitly voiced by the world's leaders in favour of the reform of the Security Council will finally meld into decisive political actions in this direction.

Ukraine shares the current opinion of the absolute majority of Member States that at present the quantitative composition of the Security Council, its functions and its working methods should be appropriately changed. This is connected with the necessity to enhance representation in the Security Council of new regional realities, in particular, the emergence of new States in the international arena.

Ukraine favours an increase in the composition of the Security Council of up to at least 25 members, which would incorporate the interests of all the regional groups and correspond to the principle of equitable geographic distribution. The delegation of Ukraine firmly believes that additional seats in the Security Council should be provided for all the regional groups. I wish to stress that Ukraine will not support any variant of the reform of the Security Council that does not provide for additional seats for the Group of Eastern European States. At present, that regional Group, despite having almost doubled in size to 20 States, has only one non-permanent seat. Thus, excluding Russia, 19 States of the Group theoretically have a chance to be elected to occupy this seat in the Council once every 35 years.

In our opinion, any change in the composition of the Security Council should take into account the contributions of individual States to United Nations activities in the maintenance of international peace and security, their participation in United Nations humanitarian-assistance activities and their support for peace-keeping operations. In this light, Ukraine would like to see Germany and Japan permanently present in the Security Council.

On the basis of the same criteria for expansion, the proposal of the delegation of Italy, which has been supported by quite a large group of States, looks very attractive. We are prepared to cooperate in the search for a comprehensive solution to this extremely important issue.

The delegation of Ukraine believes that the creation of eight non-permanent seats, each of which would rotate between three States, making a total of 24 States, would make it possible for the countries which make considerable contributions to United Nations peace-keeping activities and the financing of the Organization and which represent the majority of the world's population to take on the great responsibility of being engaged in the peacemaking activities of the international community.

At the same time, those eight members would not be eligible to occupy the 10 seats allocated at present to the non-permanent Security Council members. In our opinion, this would give small Member States an opportunity to be elected to the Council more often.

Naturally, the exact criteria and mechanism for selecting those 24 States should be negotiated by the Member States and adopted by the General Assembly.

Ukraine is of the opinion that the issue of certain modifications of the veto right and its gradual elimination should be studied. The elimination of the ideological rivalry between the East and the West and the establishment of partnership relations between the permanent members of the Security Council make the institution of the veto historically obsolete and politically unjustified. Its existence only seduces the permanent members of the Security Council into sometimes using this organ in their narrow national interests, to the detriment of the interests of the international community as a whole.

It is the Ukrainian delegation's firm conviction that the issues of cluster II should not be held hostage to the principal problem of the expansion of the Security Council. Many steps have been made towards democratization and transparency in the Council's methods of work. The most important among them are the introduction of the regular briefings of the Presidency by the Security Council, which should be formally institutionalized in the rules of procedure, and the organization of meetings between the members of the Security Council and troop-contributing States.

At the same time, in our opinion, Member States should urge that members of the Security Council to undertake the following steps: enhance information coverage for non-members on the activity of the Council; enhance availability to non-members of the Council of all documents being discussed by the Council; organize on a regular basis open, formal Security Council consultations at an early stage of the discussion of an issue; and publish thematically selected monthly reviews containing briefings on the positions of each Security Council member State on individual issues discussed by the Council during the month.

The reform of the Security Council is long overdue. The Member States should finally take on this burden of responsibility of historic dimensions and start reforming the United Nations. Let me remind members of the words of one of the most outstanding Presidents of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson, which are inscribed on the memorial to him in Washington:

> "I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions. But, as circumstances change, institutions must also advance to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man still to wear the coat which fitted him when a boy as require civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors."

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*): After more than two years of lengthy, not to say marathon, discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, we have today arrived at an important stage. Indeed, we must take stock of the situation and, on the basis of that assessment, give serious thought to charting our future course, with a view to attaining the ultimate common objective towards which we are striving.

The issue before us, of course, is neither simple nor easy. On the contrary, it is complex, difficult and multifaceted, requiring serious consideration by us all. But, strictly speaking, "difficult" and "complex" do not mean "insoluble". If we are resolute in our common political will, our views and opinions, which are still divergent on several points, can be in due course reasonably reconciled. We are saying, loud and clear, that we want to reform the Security Council and to make it a more transparent and effective body. That is the crux of the matter; indeed, it is our ambitious common goal. United in the quest to achieve that goal, and in close consultation with one another, we should thus exert the utmost effort, using all the means at our disposal, with a view to the earliest possible attainment of our shared objective.

The position of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is well known. We have declared our stance on numerous occasions, both here in the plenary General Assembly, and at the level of the Open-ended Working Group.

We continue to believe that there is good reason to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council by expanding its membership, and in particular the representation of the developing countries, in order better to reflect the new global political realities. As for the composition of the Council, like many delegations, we too wish to see an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members. In our view, increasing the number of permanent members — including both developed and developing countries — would strengthen the United Nations and its legitimacy, because it would then better reflect the new international political configuration. As to the criteria for selection, we note the observations that have been made and take the view that this issue deserves more in-depth examination.

Just as important is increasing the number of non-permanent members. In our view, this increase, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 24 of the Charter, would enhance the Council's legitimacy. Better yet, it would give more States a seat on the Council and enable them to participate in its work, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

The question of the right of veto is one of the most important questions we must discuss. Most delegations are of the view that the right of veto is anachronistic, anti-democratic and contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. This is an important point of view which merits serious consideration. However, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is prepared to join any consensus that might emerge in the consideration of this most delicate issue.

We welcome the measures already taken by the Security Council to enhance the effectiveness of its relations with the States Members of the Organization as a whole and to improve its practices and working methods. These include, among other things, the daily or twice-weekly information briefings held by the President of the Council for non-members of the Council; the meetings between the members of the Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat; the Council President's consultations with concerned countries on matters being considered by the Council; the more frequent holding of open Council meetings, especially when an issue is first being considered; the issuance for non-members of provisional texts, printed in blue, of Council draft resolutions at the same time as they are distributed to members of the Council; and measures designed to improve the transparency of procedures in sanctions committees. These measures and practices are the first fruit of our joint efforts, and we fervently hope that they will be institutionalized in order to guarantee their systematic application by the Council.

Having said this, there is, quite frankly, still much to be done. By way of example, we would like to draw attention to the question of the relationship between the Security Council and the Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Council. We feel that the Council must inform and consult with countries that are affected by its decisions. Furthermore, it would be appropriate for the Council to grant those countries the right to state their position publicly to the Council before it begins informal consultations and the right to attend informal consultations of the whole as observers. This practice can only be to the good and would serve simultaneously the interests of the Council and those of the countries affected by its decisions. We all want to help parties to a conflict solve their problems, and by giving them a hearing we would gain a better understanding and therefore be in a better position to do so.

We said at the very outset that the question of reforming the Security Council was neither simple nor easy. We also said that it was not insoluble. During its last two sessions, the Open-ended Working Group made some measure of progress. We are on the right track. We should keep up the pace and, above all, take full advantage of the momentum of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary to move ahead and make even greater progress in the future. The complexity of the issue is such that we, like several other delegations, want to avoid setting deadlines for the completion of our work. We do want to recall, however, that unless within a reasonable period of time we reach a comprehensive agreement acceptable to all, we will all have to continue putting up with the status quo, and, as we all know, maintaining the status quo is not what we want. We all want to reform the Council so that it can become a more effective and efficient authority that enjoys the full confidence of all the States Members of our Organization. This is our common goal.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to request all speakers to be brief and not to exceed ten minutes, in any case.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): I would like to begin with a word of congratulation and admiration for the work done in past months by Ambassadors Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. The progress made has been largely due to the tireless efforts, imagination and inexhaustible energy with which they carry out their work.

The reform of the Security Council is one of the most important reforms needed in the United Nations system. It is also one of the most sensitive reforms, and, moreover, it is most clearly overdue. The main reasons for the priority nature of this reform have been stated many times. As a result, consensus has practically been achieved in respect of the understanding that the Security Council must be expanded and that its methods of work must be improved.

This is necessary if the Security Council is to have a more representative character, more support among United Nations Members and a higher degree of legitimacy in its actions. Furthermore, the right type of expansion and reform could strengthen the effectiveness of the Security Council and contribute to the authority of the United Nations in general.

I do not wish to explain in detail Slovenia's views on the question of reform of the Security Council. Let me emphasize, however, that Slovenia considers the reform of the Security Council one of the three main areas of United Nations reform, as explained in the letter, contained in document A/50/528, from the Slovenian Foreign Minister to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the subject of reform.

In the Working Group we presented our opinion on the reform of the Council in some detail on several occasions. Furthermore, our basic views are presented in the report of the Working Group, among the submissions by Member States and groups of Member States, on pages 68 to 71 of the English text. Slovenia joined the group of Member States that held similar views and participated in the elaboration of a discussion paper containing the main ideas supported by that group. We continue to hold the views presented in that document.

Among them I wish to mention, first of all, the need to increase the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats. There should be two to five additional permanent members. In choosing those members, account should be taken of candidate's global influence and capacity and their willingness to contribute to the maintenance of the international peace and security.

Furthermore, there should be an appropriate increase in non-permanent membership in order to preserve a balance in the composition of the Security Council. The reformed Council should have a total of 20 to 25 members. At that size, the Council's representative character would be enhanced, while at the same time the necessary ability for prompt, effective and continuous action, as required by the Charter, would be preserved.

On the other hand, we believe that the rule on the ineligibility for immediate re-election of a retiring non-permanent member of the Security Council should be retained as a necessary safeguard for the protection of small and medium-sized Member States.

Furthermore, we do not favour any direct or indirect introduction of new categories of members of the Security Council, since we believe that such an approach would lead to the marginalization of all non-permanent members of the Security Council other than those entitled to, for example, more frequent rotation or any other special status.

We agree with those who favour regulating and limiting the use of the veto, and we hope that in the coming year the Working Group on reform of the

Security Council will have a meaningful discussion of this matter.

We also maintain the view that the General Assembly should be able to formulate a set of recommendations concerning the Security Council's methods of work. The existing innovations in methodology have improved transparency to some extent, but more needs to be done.

In this connection, I wish to mention a proposal that France — a permanent member of the Security Council — made about a year ago. France proposed open orientation debates as a means of creating a better balance between, on the one hand, discussions that are necessary for an appropriate assessment of the situations being considered by the Council and, on the other hand, negotiations leading to specific decisions by the Council. While negotiations involve the Council's members only, open orientation debates would give other interested United Nations Members an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution prior to negotiations leading to specific decisions. As the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands reminded us earlier today, the Security Council has, in general, approved that proposal. We the Members of the United Nations now await its implementation.

Another area in which there could be improvement without the need to change the text of the Charter is that of Security Council reports to the General Assembly. Special Council reports to the Assembly are envisaged in Article 15 of the Charter. The Security Council should be encouraged to give life to that provision whenever appropriate.

The General Assembly, on the other hand, should take the necessary measures to provide for meaningful consideration of the Council's annual report and its special reports, if any, with a view to making useful recommendations to the Council.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that the Working Group on reform of the Security Council will soon enter a very important stage. We agree with the Permanent Representative of Portugal, who, in his statement yesterday, stressed that flexibility will be necessary and that bridges between different views must be built — and crossed — so that we may make genuine progress in our work. Choices will also have to be made. We are hopeful that the Working Group will be able to manage the process of negotiations in a manner that will result in much-needed success.

Mr. Leghari (Pakistan): Let me convey my delegation's deep appreciation of the outstanding manner in which the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council was guided by His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, the President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, and his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand. My delegation would like to thank them for their efforts in preparing the report of the Working Group in document A/49/47. We look forward to working with the President of the current session of the General Assembly.

Pakistan participated actively, constructively and positively in the consultations on Security Council reform that were held during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. However, as is indicated in the Open-ended Working Group's report, despite extensive consultations differences continue to exist on the key issues before the Group. These differences warrant further, in-depth consideration of the issues before we move any further. Besides, a whole range of proposals and ideas have been put forward. These should all be examined objectively and dispassionately, with a view to ensuring the best interests of all Member States.

The proposed reform and enlargement of the Security Council is an important subject, which, in any review, must be understood in the context of the current climate in international relations. Following the end of the cold war, hopes were revived that a strengthened and more effective Security Council would emerge, both as an important deterrent to aggression and as an instrument to reverse aggression wherever it occurred. It was hoped that, freed from the dictates of a bipolar world, the Security Council would be able to come, swiftly and decisively, to the rescue of the victims of abuse and conflict.

The Council's failure to implement its resolutions on Bosnia and Herzegovina, its inadequate response in the case of Rwanda and its inability to implement its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir have all contributed to a sense of insecurity. The gap between the rhetoric of the Council's resolutions and its performance on the ground to implement them has widened. Instead of a new world order supervised by the Security Council, we are faced with a number of disputes and conflicts raging across the globe and with a Security Council that has not been able to implement its own resolutions, or has done so in a selective manner.

It is in the context of today, and with a full appreciation of its strengths and limitations, that we should seek to promote ways and means of making the Security Council more effective in the preservation of international peace and security.

The Security Council has inbuilt inequities. It is composed of a very small number of member States. It is divided between permanent and non-permanent members — those with a veto and those without. Pakistan firmly believes that the primary objectives of our present exercise should be to promote greater democracy, equal participation, transparency and accountability in the Council's work. We are convinced that if these objectives are kept in mind, ways and means of enhancing both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Council, in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter, can be explored.

The number of United Nations Members, which stood at 51 in 1945, has increased to 185 in 1995. Pakistan fully shares the general desire of Member States to strengthen the Security Council's role, as well as to review its composition in order to reflect the substantial increase in the membership of the Organization. We also believe that the overall composition of the Security Council needs to be balanced in terms of representation — in particular, representation of the large number of small and medium-sized States that have joined the United Nations.

The Council's current composition lacks balance in terms of geographical distribution. However, any attempt to give various regions more representation should appropriately reflect the circumstances in each region. The arguments for equitable regional representation must be viewed in the context of the legitimate concerns of all Member States in a particular region. Any accommodation of regional representation should not fuel the tendencies towards hegemony and domination that are manifest in some regions. Once again, our approach must uphold the principle of the sovereign equality of States and must avoid consecrating regional inequalities.

The concept of permanent membership is at variance with the principle of sovereign equality, which is the operating principle of the United Nations. The present inequity that is inherent in the concept of permanent membership should therefore not be further strengthened or consolidated. It is in this context that Pakistan is against any increase in the permanent membership of the Security Council. Such an expansion would merely serve to accommodate the interests of only a few countries and alienate the smaller and medium-sized countries, which constitute an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly.

As my Prime Minister, Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, stated in this very Hall on 24 October 1995:

> "The Security Council needs enlargement, but not in its permanent membership." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 39th meeting, p. 24)*

Pakistan would thus like strongly to advocate an increase in the category of non-permanent members that would proportionately reflect the increase in the general membership of the United Nations, particularly the large number of small and medium-sized States. We strongly support the view that the Security Council's reform and the expansion of its non-permanent membership should be a comprehensive exercise with a view to enhancing its effectiveness as well as its efficient functioning.

Pakistan would like to reiterate the importance it has always attached to the reform of the United Nations. Pakistan fully supports the reaffirmation made only recently by the non-aligned Summit in Cartagena that both the reform of the Security Council and its expansion should take into account the principles of sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution.

There is also a need for transparency, accountability and democratization in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. Pakistan remains strongly opposed to the creation of any new centres of privilege within the United Nations system. Is it justified to extend centres of privilege when the entire world is moving towards democracy? These centres are, indeed, anachronistic, anti-democratic and contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Any resolution that did not take into account these concerns of the vast majority of the United Nations Member States would not be acceptable to the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would like to remind this Assembly that the question of the expansion of the permanent membership was considered only recently, at the special session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council held in New York in August and September 1995. During the consideration of this subject by that Council, this idea was firmly rejected and was therefore not reflected in the Final Declaration issued at the conclusion of the special session.

In addition to the expansion of the Security Council, there are other aspects that need equal attention in the reform process. Any meaningful review of the Security Council's functioning must encompass the broader and vital issues of democratization and transparency in the decision-making process. Democratization can be achieved by strengthening the Council's relationship with the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies with a view to evolving a joint working relationship between the Security Council and these bodies in the maintenance of international peace and security. An effective mechanism should be established to convey the General Assembly's views and recommendations on peace and security to the Security Council. This would enhance the participation of the general membership of our Organization in the Council's decision-making process. A working group of the Assembly could be created to analyse the Council's report before its consideration in the plenary Assembly.

The Open-ended Working Group could also examine the possibility of creating a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly under Article 22 that could consider and discuss questions related to international peace and security. In addition, the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council should meet regularly to coordinate the work of the two bodies.

The primary responsibility of promoting greater transparency rests with the Security Council. We are gratified to note that the Council has taken many positive steps to enhance its relationship with the General Assembly. However, more concrete steps are required for closer consultations with United Nations Members, particularly the troop-contributing countries, in pursuance of Article 44 of the United Nations Charter. A subsidiary organ of the Security Council could be established under Article 29 to monitor peace-keeping operations and to institutionalize a system of thorough consultations with troop-contributing countries at all stages of any peace-keeping operation.

The direct linkage between economic and social problems and political upheavals in various parts of the world is very obvious. There is an urgent need to strengthen the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council so that economic and social factors are duly taken into account in decisions relating to international peace and security. There is a legitimate reason to fear that the current global economic crisis could lead to potential conflicts, both within and among States, in the future. The Economic and Social Council could serve in many cases to provide the Security Council with an early warning of impending upheavals and conflicts.

It is of fundamental importance that the outcome of our efforts be in strict conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. It must be based on consensus and agreement among Member States. A decision on this question that lacks the support of the general United Nations membership will be counterproductive. It may erode general support for the future role of the Security Council and cast doubt on the sanctity of its decisions.

In conclusion, I would like to state that Pakistan will continue to work diligently with other United Nations Members to evolve a consensus on the reform of the Security Council that advances the cause of peace, security and the aims and objectives of the Charter. We have to be patient in this important exercise, without being tardy.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express my admiration for the important efforts of the former Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, Mr. Amara Essy, President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, and his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Pibulsonggram of Thailand, who led the Group in an outstanding fashion at the last session.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has been the subject of our particular attention in proportion to the Council's vital role and responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation has carefully followed the deliberations of the Working Group over the past two sessions. As all are well-aware, consensus has yet to be reached on the issue of increasing the Council's membership and other related issues, such as improving the Council's working methods, despite the number of meetings held by the Working Group over the past two sessions.

This, however, should not discourage or prevent us from persisting in our efforts; indeed, we should step up and intensify those efforts in the coming period in order for us to be able to reach a consensus formula regarding the composition of the Council and the required reforms. We are aware of the fact that the path we shall have to tread towards our goal is long and arduous. However, we shall be able to reach our goal if we eschew our differences and set aside considerations dictated by narrow national interests. As stipulated by Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States. In the interests of all, this must continue to be the case.

Kuwait's interest in the deliberations on increase in the membership of the Council stems from our desire to preserve the Council's effectiveness and capability in the maintenance of international peace and security, which came to the fore when the Security Council opposed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Council's outstanding firmness and effectiveness during its consideration of that matter in 1990 made possible the 1991 liberation of Kuwait. That effectiveness must be bolstered and maintained in order to deter future aggressive tendencies by States that would violate international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter and thus threaten international stability and security.

Kuwait shares the interests, problems and ambitions of other small States in the ongoing discussions regarding the increase of Security Council membership. Small States must not be left by the wayside when an agreement is reached, for that could result in an unbalanced, undemocratic Security Council that would not embody international legality as fully as it should. For these reasons, we hope that we will be able to reach agreement in accordance with the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States and the principle of equitable geographical representation. There is also a vital need to agree on machinery within the framework of regional groups to give small States access to membership of the Council.

Kuwait supports increasing the membership of the Security Council for many reasons, foremost among which is the large increase in the membership of the United Nations, the many changes that have taken place on the international scene and the new international situation that has generated numerous challenges which make it necessary to adapt the organs of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, in a manner that would enable them to rise up to those challenges.

My delegation believes that any increase in the membership of the Security Council must be geared to the achievement of the purposes we seek, namely: strengthening the Security Council in order for it to be able to discharge the major responsibilities entrusted to it in the maintenance of international peace and security; the new composition of the Council must reflect the universal nature of the United Nations and conform to the reality of the General Assembly, which now has 185 Member States and through which members of the Security Council are elected; enhancing the prestige of the Council is bound to strengthen international commitment to abide by its resolutions; honouring the principle of equitable geographical representation is bound to make the Council more representative and democratic; any increase in the Council's membership, must not impact negatively on its effectiveness. The Council's effectiveness must be protected and enhanced.

With respect to reforming the Security Council's working methods and developing its relations with other United Nations bodies, especially with the General Assembly, Kuwait supports all proposals aimed at increased transparency and clarity in the Council's work and at better dissemination of information to the Member States and vice versa. The Council should continually consult with all the States directly or indirectly concerned in any of the matters it deals with. This would enhance the credibility and legitimacy of the resolutions it adopts on such matters.

While Kuwait commends and welcomes the steps and measures already adopted by the Security Council along these lines, we hope that such steps and measures will be institutionalized and incorporated into the Council's rules of procedure.

My delegation notes that many concrete and constructive proposals have been put forward with respect to the right of veto; these deserve study by the Working Group with a view to finding a consensus formula that could satisfy all parties concerned and enable the Security Council to carry out its responsibilities without impediments.

My delegation believes that the proposal put forward by the Non-Aligned Movement to review the membership of the Security Council every 20 to 25 years, would be useful in narrowing the gaps between the differing views of States and in paving the way towards agreement.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the deliberations of the Working Group will be successful and will lead to a consensus that would strengthen the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security and enable it to draw on the experiences of the past to better understand the present and to be better equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Programme of work

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to make an announcement concerning the programme of work of the General Assembly.

I should like to inform members that agenda item 11, "Report of the Security Council", will be taken up on Tuesday, 28 November, in the afternoon. The list of speakers for this item is now open.

Members are reminded that the list of speakers is also now open for agenda item 38, "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti", which, as announced yesterday afternoon, will be considered on Tuesday, 21 November, in the morning as the second item.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations
A/50/PV.59

General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

Official Records

59th plenary meeting

Tuesday, 14 November 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Lamamra (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 47 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Valencia Rodriguez (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first of all to express my delegation's appreciation to the Open-ended Working Group, which, under the chairmanship of the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Amara Essy, was able to count on the selfless work of the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand.

On the occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Heads of State and Government adopted a historic Declaration expressing the unanimous view of the international community that

> "the Security Council must … be expanded and its working methods reviewed in order to strengthen its capacity, increase its representative character and improve the efficiency and transparency of its working procedures". (*resolution 50/6, para. 14)*

This effort must be considered as a fundamental part of the restructuring of the United Nations that we are all working for, because the Security Council, as the main executive organ of the Organization, is the first to be called upon to take account of the consequences of the end of the cold war, the democratization process spreading around the world, and the need to strengthen the Council's authority and efficacy.

The Non-Aligned Movement has stressed the general criteria that must be borne in mind in connection with this process. First, the reform and expansion of the Council should be considered as a whole and as part of a single initiative. Secondly, the major principles that must be observed as this effort unfolds are the equal sovereignty of States and equitable geographical distribution. Thirdly, the objectives that must be pursued are transparency and democratization, as well as the strengthening of the responsibility of that organ.

Under the Charter of San Francisco, the relationship between the General Assembly — the most important political forum of the international community — and the Security Council must be precisely spelled out on the basis of the annual and special reports provided for in Article 15 and of the broad competence of the General Assembly as stipulated in Article 11.

Ecuador set forth these criteria in the Assembly's general debate. We stressed that the reform and new composition of the Security Council must more appropriately reflect the current membership of the

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

United Nations and the new realities of the world so that the Council can promptly and efficiently adopt early warning measures to prevent conflicts, re-establish or consolidate peace, and deploy or continue peace-keeping operations.

Ecuador set forth its criteria for increasing the membership of the Security Council, during the discussion in the plenary Assembly last year. It stated, and now reiterates, its recognition of and support for the legitimate aspirations of countries such as Brazil, Germany and Japan, as well as of regions such as Africa and Asia, to be represented on the Security Council as permanent members. We also noted that these aspirations must be evaluated on the basis of the need to abide by equitable distribution among various geographical regions, so as to correct the existing imbalance, both in the permanent and in the non-permanent Membership, that favours a single region.

The Charter stipulates that the fundamental requirement for membership in the Security Council is a Member State's contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization. Consequently, becoming a member of the Security Council means not only shouldering major responsibilities for the costs of peace-keeping operations, but also contributing efficiently to the attainment of the other purposes enshrined in the Charter. Being a member of the Security Council involves great responsibilities but also entails the potential for bringing special influence to bear upon the international community.

Under Articles 24 and 25 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of the Members of the United Nations, and its decisions must be carried out by all of them. Thus, while those decisions have to be taken by the Members of the Council, the other countries have to be at least duly and properly informed of them. It should be recalled that the changes designed to achieve transparency in the work of the Security Council require changes also in the rules of procedure that will facilitate prior and at least rudimentary insight into what the Council may decide.

Ecuador does not support the extension of the veto privilege to other Security Council members, because that would increase the chances of paralysis in the Council's work. It must be recognized that the veto has had its merits and its grave defects.

In the middle of the cold war it made it possible for the great Powers to join the United Nations they themselves had established. If circumstances had been different, they might not have done so or might have deserted the Organization. It saved our Organization from extinction by keeping the great Powers from becoming involved in political and armed conflicts with unforeseeable consequences or in impossible missions. It promoted a sense of responsibility among those Powers, though not always fully. It fostered recognition of the need for the Big Five to consult and reduced the risk of a grave confrontation between power politics and the valid legal norms established in the Charter.

Nobody, however, disputes the fact that the veto is an anti-democratic privilege diametrically opposed to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. The circumstances that once justified its creation and retention over these 50 years have vanished. This prompts us to assert that that privilege must also cease to exist. Inasmuch as this is not realistically possible, since the Big Five are taking an inflexible posture in respect of retaining that power, we should ask them to act with a sense of responsibility attuned to current realities.

In this context, it is perhaps not too much to hope that they might voluntarily agree to restrict the use of this privilege so that it will be applied only in cases of measures envisaged in Chapter VII of the Charter with regard to maintaining and consolidating peace. This aspiration, or dream, could become a reality even by means of simple agreements between the Big Five or through minor procedural changes, thus making it unnecessary to undertake a complicated reform of the Charter.

If none of these initiatives meets with success, our remaining contingency step would perhaps be to promote only an increase in the number of non-permanent members on the basis of the principles I have just outlined. There are many proposals for attaining this end, including, for instance, the one submitted by Italy. What we cannot accept is the Council's continuing to function as it has and with a membership that does not reflect the considerable increase in the membership of the Organization.

Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Colombia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The many changes that have taken place in our international relations must be reflected in the structures and practices of our international Organization. The United Nations system as a whole needs to be reformed and revitalized in order to render it transparent, accountable and democratic.

On the need to reform and expand the Security Council, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, in his address on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, had this to say:

> "The Security Council, as now constituted, empowers only a small minority of the victorious allies of a war of half a century ago to continue to wield sweeping powers that enable it to take or block decisions affecting the destiny of the majority of Member States sitting in the General Assembly." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 5)*

The imbalances and inequities inherent in the present structures and practices of the Council, including permanent membership and the power of veto, defy logic and run counter to the very democratic principles and values that Member States are promoting in their domestic political practices. Permanent membership and the power of veto hold collective international decision-making hostage to the narrow interests of a privileged and powerful few. Democratization, transparency and equitable geographical representation should not be elements of dispute at all in this reform process. Ideally, and in the long term, all members of the Security Council should be elected on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical representation to ensure their accountability to the general membership of the Organization, on whose behalf, in accordance with the Charter they carry out their primary function of maintaining international peace and security.

It is regrettable that this logical and self-evident approach appears not to be acceptable to the present permanent members of the Security Council. The work done so far in the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly suggests that it will take time to tackle the issue effectively with this serious approach. In the meantime, therefore, we are forced to seek reform within the very narrow confines of outmoded structures and practices.

Proceeding from the premise that the Security Council acts on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations, it is logical that an expanded United Nations, which has grown from 51 Members in 1945 to the present 185, would dictate an increased membership of the Security Council if that subsidiary organ is to be representative and democratic. Debate on this issue has clearly demonstrated that the Council can no longer continue to operate as an exclusive club purporting to serve the interests of the full membership of the United Nations.

Furthermore, the permanent membership of the Council must reflect a fair geographical representation of all the regions of the world. In this regard, it is objectionable that all of Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are unrepresented and Asia is underrepresented in the permanent membership of the Council.

We believe that Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean should each have at least two permanent seats, with incumbents enjoying the same rights and privileges as the present permanent members. Additional non-permanent seats should also be allocated to each of those regions so as to ensure equitable geographical representation commensurate with the vastly increased membership of the United Nations.

The veto, which we feel should eventually be abolished, should also be reviewed in the light of the changing international circumstances. Its scope and use should be limited, perhaps to those issues which are clearly and specifically related to the maintenance of international peace and security. Even then, is it not time for a separate voting mechanism to be introduced to validate or pass a veto?

It is equally imperative that new measures and practices be introduced to improve the Council's working methods and procedures, as well as to enhance its relationship with the general membership. Specifically, we believe that a formal mechanism should be established for collaboration between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Obviously, the Security Council's submission to the General Assembly of the traditional compendia of resolutions and statements, coupled with its occasional rounds of news bulletins and briefings, falls far short of any meaningful involvement of the general membership in the decision-making process. Cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly should be promoted to foster a freer flow of information and afford greater transparency and accountability to the international community.

Many of us had expressed, and indeed cherished, the hope that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations would be an auspicious occasion for the baptism of a reformed and expanded Security Council. Debate on this issue has already distilled, though without total agreement, the major concepts whose due consideration could endow the Security Council with a minimum reflection of the universal character of the United Nations, and the present-day realities, which call for the widest possible participation in the Council's work and decision-making process.

We believe that the current lively and heavily subscribed debate on this question bears indisputable testimony to the urgent need for the membership of the Organization to gather courage and political will and tackle head-on this long-overdue exercise.

Mr. Hamdoon (Iraq)(*interpretation from Arabic*): I take pleasure, at the outset, to wholeheartedly thank the Chairman of the Working Group and his two vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representative of Finland and the Permanent Representative of Thailand, for their unremitting efforts in guiding the activities of the Working Group on the issues of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters relating to the Security Council. Those efforts have taken tangible shape in document A/49/965.

The Working Group's discussions during the last two sessions of the General Assembly have highlighted the great importance the international community attaches to the process of reforming the Security Council and have shown how comprehensive and profound this reform is expected to be. The Member States' keen interest in this matter stems from the strong desire to safeguard the legitimacy and credibility of the Security Council and of the United Nations system as a whole. The original composition of the Security Council, its procedures and methods of work, reflect the balances of power as they existed at the end of the Second World War.

Today, fifty years later, and apart from the limited 1963 increase in the non-permanent membership of the Council, no substantive change has been introduced in the Council's composition and methods of work. This applies to the Council's rules of procedure which remain provisional and to the unlimited privileges of the five permanent members. While the international community's concern over the loose definition of the Council's competence and the risk of abuse of its powers was rather muted in the cold war era because of the near paralysis induced by bipolar competition in the Council, the post-cold-war era and the monopolar world it has given rise to have brought home to the international community the risks inherent in the monopoly of power in the Council by one single State and have shown the vulnerability of this very important organ in the face of the attempts aimed at dominating it in contravention of Article 24 of the Charter which stipulates that the Security Council acts on behalf of all the members of the Organization. The Security Council has been used over the past five years as a cover for practices that have flown directly in the face of the principles of the Charter. The Security Council has made it possible for the State that holds sway over it, along with its allies, to use their military might to destroy Iraq's infrastructure and, thereby, to push Iraq back into the pre-industrial age. A sanctions regime has been imposed upon Iraq which contradicts the principles of human rights and contravenes the very definite goal of the measures included in Chapter 7 of the Charter.

Suffice it, by way of an example, to give thought to paragraph 21 in S/RES/678 (1991). That article concerns the conditions of lifting of sanctions imposed on Iraq. That particular paragraph linked the reduction on lifting of the said sanctions to the policies and practices of the Government of Iraq, including the implementation by Iraq of all relevant resolutions of the Security Council. How could a comprehensive regime of sanctions be imposed with such ambiguous terms for the eventual lifting of the sanctions, especially when we take into consideration the fact that those comprehensive sanctions have claimed, to this date, the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians as a result of the shortages of foodstuffs and medication they have caused.

In addition to the situation in Iraq, the past five years have seen practices by the Security Council that have been far removed from the role envisioned for it in the Charter. We have seen the Council sending warships to a people, such as the Somalis, who have been in the grip of famine. By contrast, we have seen it stand by, as spectator, in the case of another country that is the victim of the crime of genocide, as in Rwanda. We have seen it impose sanctions on another country, namely, Libya, under the pretext of an allegation that, to this date, remains unproven, while it turns a deaf ear to the calls by that country and by regional organizations to seek an acceptable solution to the problem. These few examples, out of many others, point squarely at a credibility crisis, a legitimacy crisis and, also, at a moral crisis that beset the Security Council at present. Such crises have reached such a point that the measures adopted by the Security Council have become the cause of controversy between the legislative and executive branches of government in some States that are permanent members of the Security

Council. Certain of those branches find that the Security Council's measures are illegal and should not be enforced while other branches take the opposite view.

This bitter reality makes it necessary to comprehensively review the Security Council's composition, its procedures and methods of work as well as its relations with the other organs of the United Nations so as to restore that body's proper role as defined in the Charter, namely that of a tool used by the international community to maintain international peace and security.

My delegation is of the view that reforming the composition of the Council and reforming its procedures and methods of work are two faces of the same coin. They cannot be treated as separate issues, neither could one of them be given priority over the other. Reforming the Council's composition is required in order for the Council to be truly representative of all the States Members of the United Nations. This could be achieved only through expanding the Council's membership in accordance with the principle of equitable geographic distribution, with due regard to the aspirations and interests of developing countries, which make up the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations. In this connection, my delegation fully supports the proposals regarding increased membership put forward by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries as contained in document A/49/965.

On the other hand, reforming the working methods of the Security Council and its relations with other United Nations organs constitute the other face of the coin of the reform process. My delegation believes that the following matters acquire particular importance, in relation to any genuine reform of the Security Council.

First, steps must begin to be taken towards limiting the use of the veto power in preparation for its eventual abolition, as it is a non-democratic privilege that runs counter to the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

Secondly, the Council's relations with the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice should be improved. Participation by these two organs in the decision-making process within the Council should be ensured. The roles of both the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice should be revitalized in dealing with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, to resolving international disputes, and to preventive diplomacy. This would lessen the need for intervention by the Security Council, particularly considering that the supreme deliberative organ of the United Nations is the General Assembly, responsible for decision-making in the United Nations system. Regional organizations too must be afforded the opportunity of using their mechanisms in trying to find appropriate solutions to disputes between their members. This would promote the role of those organizations and enhance their independence. Moreover, it would be appropriate to consider the setting up of a mechanism to ensure the accountability of the Security Council *vis-à-vis* the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice in order to avoid selectivity, double standards and narrow interpretations in the Security Council's handling of international problems.

Thirdly, the Security Council's rules of procedure should be amended in order to ensure democracy and transparency in its functioning, make it possible for the Member States to participate in the decision-making process and the adoption of resolutions, and allow States that are non-members of the Council to participate in its informal consultations. Participation by Member States in the decision-making process would give tangible form to the principle that stipulates that the Security Council acts on behalf of all the Member States and, thereby, ensure for its resolutions the respect of the whole world.

It is also necessary to improve the methods of work of the Council's subsidiary bodies and their relations with the Member States of the United Nations. Here I should like to mention specifically the need for the Sanctions Committees to abide by the principles of democracy in carrying out their tasks and the need for those Committees to enable the States concerned to attend their meetings and to make the complete minutes of their meetings available to all Member States.

Fourthly, a machinery should be set up to lessen the need to have recourse to the mechanisms of Chapter VII by the Security Council. In this respect, consideration could be given to the proposal that resolutions by the Security Council on military intervention or the imposition of sanctions should be approved by a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly in order for such resolutions to have the necessary international support.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reaffirm that the extreme importance we all attach to reforming the Security Council requires us all to persevere and to take advantage of the momentum that has emerged from the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary in seeking to achieve the desired objective. However, this must not lead us to impose an artificial ceiling, in terms of time, for the completion of the Working Group's task, so that we may fully benefit from the mature consideration of reform proposals that would respond to the aspirations of the international community with regard to the Working Group's endeavour.

Mr. Reyn (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: Exactly two years ago, during its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly established a Working Group to consider all aspects of a reform of the Security Council and an increase in its membership.

During those two years, the Working Group accomplished an important task — all are agreed on that — in particular during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. In this connection, we should like at the outset to thank and congratulate Chairman Essy and above all the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Pibulsonggram, for the manner in which they guided our work and in particular for their assessment of it. The discussion within the Group allowed delegations to make clear their views on reforming the Council and to better understand those of others. Proposals were put forward, some individually and others collectively.

We cannot, however, deny that important differences of opinion persist. How could it be otherwise in view of the complexity of the issue, its sensitive nature and, above all, the importance we all attach to it?

With other countries that have a similar view regarding the reform of the Security Council, we distributed, within the Working Group, a discussion paper setting out the framework of principles on which, as we see it, reform of the Council should be structured. This paper was issued by the Secretariat at the end of the forty-ninth session in a compendium of proposals, as members are well aware. I shall therefore not enter here into the details of the reform principles contained in that discussion paper; some of my colleagues have in fact already done so. I should like merely to reiterate that this discussion paper constitutes a flexible and open framework that can be adapted to the ideas that will be put forward in the forthcoming consultations by the Working Group. This discussion paper does not constitute a rigid or definitive framework, but, I repeat, a framework of principles on which to base our discussion.

At the beginning of next year, the Working Group will resume its work. Differences of opinion doubtless will remain for a long time. But we have a choice: we can pursue this explanatory phase of our work and perhaps reaffirm our positions without making any genuine progress towards a solution, or we can, at the appropriate time, engage in an exercise of genuine negotiation. In describing this choice, I do not wish to seem unrealistic. I do not mean, for instance, that we should set a rigid time-table; that would not be very realistic. But, I wish to point out that in our view an exercise in rhetoric can no longer be of any real use to us. If we have the will to carry out the reform of the Council — and I believe that this will does exist — then doubtless we will gradually have to change the spirit of our work.

Changing the spirit of our work may not necessarily pave the way to a quick solution. But we may be able to take firmer steps in that direction.

The only point of reforming the Council is if it leads to improvements in all aspects of the Council's activities, not to retrogression. We cannot allow ourselves to damage this essential United Nations organ. Let us have no illusions: any reform that undermined the Council could lead to the emergence of ad hoc parallel systems which would be beyond our control. Accepting the urgent need to improve the Council clearly does not preclude efforts to decide, by consensus, on the kind of improvement we wish and on how to implement it. This is the spirit which, in our view, should guide our future work.

In my brief statement today, I wanted above all to describe my feelings and our feelings about the spirit rather than the substance of the work we will have to resume next year. We have certainly come too far to turn back. Our work may not yet be sufficiently ripe for reform. We must, nevertheless, continue our efforts, with transparency, in a spirit of consensus, and above all with the will to achieve a realistic reform of the Council that can best serve our common interests.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): In the months preceding the present discussion, the Open-ended Working Group was charged with examining the "Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters". It heard the many and varied views of delegations. My delegation would like to congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen on the manner in which they conducted those proceedings. In this regard, we should also like to express our gratitude for their efforts in producing the compendium of observations and assessment of the two Vice-Chairmen contained in document A/49/965. The collation in this document of proposals and other documents presented to the Open-ended Working Group is a useful tool. It is our understanding, however, that delegations are still free to present new or additional ideas to the Open-ended Working Group when it reconvenes.

It is crucial, however, that as we move forward in this debate we conduct our affairs in an open and transparent manner. The spirit of resolution 48/26 demands that all Member States, large and small, have an equal opportunity to contribute in an open-ended setting to this question.

Allow me to make a few observations of a general nature with respect to this question.

It is common knowledge that the world within which we find ourselves today is greatly changed from that of just 10 years ago. As a result of these changes, the international community is provided with a favourable environment within which the United Nations can be refashioned to meet the present challenges. The issue demands our concerted and sustained efforts to ensure that it is addressed properly. We must place it, in practical terms, among those issues which occupy a strategic place on our common agenda.

The principal objective of the United Nations remains the maintenance of international peace and security. The challenge to the international community in achieving this objective is to address the root causes of underdevelopment, poverty and hunger, lack of democracy, injustice, religious extremism and ignorance.

Within the overall effort to reform the United Nations, South Africa believes that the structure and functioning of the Security Council should be reformed to make it more representative, democratic and transparent. The product of our work must result in a Security Council that is effective and legitimate, and reflects the realities of our modern world. We believe that this result can be achieved only if our reform and restructuring efforts are dealt with as a package. One of the products of this reform process must be that Africa will have an equitable representation on any enlarged Security Council.

We all agree that there must be an increase in the membership of the Security Council. The questions confronting us are: by how many and in which categories? South Africa fully endorses the views of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that the increase should be both in the permanent and in the non-permanent categories. We believe that should there be an enlargement of the permanent membership of the Security Council, it should be based on the principles of equitable geographical representation. It should be up to the region concerned to select the countries that should fill those seats.

In other words, any increase in the permanent membership of the Security Council by the addition of countries from the developed world must be balanced by the addition of countries from the developing world. The size of any enlargement of the Security Council, taking into account the aforementioned principles, should not exceed a number beyond which the effective functioning of the Council is impaired. Any new permanent members added to the Security Council should have all the rights, privileges and responsibilities associated with permanent membership.

My delegation believes this issue to be of vital importance to the United Nations and the evolving system of international affairs. We therefore fully support the draft decision in paragraph 17 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group contained in document A/49/47 and look forward to participating in the work of the Open-ended Working Group once it resumes.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): The Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Julio Londoño-Paredes, spoke yesterday on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on item 47, now before us. My delegation fully associates itself with his statement.

I should like to begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, who served as Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, and to the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, for their effective leadership. My delegation would like, in particular, to express its gratitude to the Vice-Chairmen for their contribution to the work of the Working Group and for submitting its report.

It is indeed gratifying to note from the Working Group's report that there is agreement that the Security Council's effectiveness should be strengthened through an increase in its membership in order to reflect more accurately not only the significant changes in the international landscape, but also the dramatic increase in the membership of the Organization. Furthermore, there was tacit recognition of the need to review the Security Council's composition, as well as its working methods and other, related matters. On this basis, the Working Group has discussed a plethora of ideas and proposals that were submitted to it and has thus laid a solid foundation for further work towards reform of the Council.

In this context, the Non-Aligned Movement, at its eleventh Summit meeting, which was held in Cartagena, Colombia, last month, reaffirmed that both reform and expansion constitute integral parts of a common package, which should take into account the principle of the sovereign equality of States, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democratization in the Security Council's working methods and procedures.

The ongoing endeavours to reform and improve certain structures and procedures of the Security Council constitute an essential component in the strengthening of multilateralism. In this context, we have always emphasized that the Council should function on the basis of equality, equity and transparency — in representation as well as in its decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the role of the Security Council has grown substantially in recent years as its members have rediscovered a sense of common purpose in confronting manifest dangers to peace and security. But, even as we acknowledge the Council's belated fulfilment of its Charter mandate, we call for its reform to render it more representative and democratically accountable.

Indisputably, expansion of the Council's membership has become imperative in order to involve more States equitably distributed geographically, that are prepared to shoulder the burden of maintaining peace and security. It is also pertinent that the power exercised over the Council's decision-making by a handful of States named in 1945 calls for revision. Hence, the Council should undergo a process of review and revitalization to ensure its dynamic adaptation to the evolving realities on the international scene so that it can continue to play an effective role as the focal point for the management of the critical issues of our time.

It is undeniable that the present arrangements — especially the permanent membership — do not reflect either the current configuration of membership of the United Nations or the profound changes and transition that have taken place in the global arena. Consequently, we face the untenable anomaly that four of the five permanent members of the Security Council are developed countries, while developing nations are not adequately represented.

A review and reappraisal of the composition not only of the permanent but also of the non-permanent membership of the Council has become imperative as a result of the substantive increase in the membership of the United Nations over the past several years. The Council has become increasingly less representative of the general membership of the United Nations. The preservation by a few countries of privileged positions of power goes against the aim of democratizing the Organization and its structure and functioning.

The present situation touches on the basic mandate and representative nature of the Council, as set out in Article 24 of the Charter. While the developed nations have a monopoly on seven Council seats — permanent and non-permanent — the developing countries have to share seven non-permanent seats. Our endeavours should therefore be comprehensive in nature so as to provide equitable and balanced representation and to facilitate the participation of all States, to reflect the universal character of the world body. We earnestly hope that it will be possible to attain a ratio that will ensure the greatest possible degree of participation in the Security Council.

It is my delegation's view that, while the principle of equitable geographic representation is a valid basis, a host of other criteria can be deemed essential for assumption of the responsibilities inherent in permanent membership of the Council.

Far from paying mere lip service and making perfunctory exhortations, States must support the United Nations as the principal multilateral Organization through which Governments should seek to resolve conflicts peacefully and thereby seek to strengthen the validity and efficacy of its organs as forums for negotiations on issues of global concern. Such a stance must have the consistent support not only of Governments, but also of the peoples concerned for the Organization — most importantly, through timely contributions to its budget.

Furthermore, Member States' willingness to assume the onerous responsibilities inherent in permanent membership of the Security Council, and thereby bolster its capacity to fulfil its mandate, should have been convincingly demonstrated by their contributions to the promotion of regional peace and global security through successful diplomatic initiatives in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as by participation in peace-keeping operations over a period of time.

Additionally, a country's standing within the new realities of regional and subregional dynamism and its part in the building of an edifice of confidence and concord should be taken fully into consideration. It is also pertinent to take into account the legitimate aspirations of the largest States and their proven capacity to exert constructive global influence and to undertake global responsibilities. Of no less importance are contributions to resolving issues of global concern, particularly through compromise, cooperation and consensus.

Economic power — both current and potential — and social progress, as well as the capacity and willingness to make significant contributions to socio-economic development are also factors. Another central criterion is a record of strong and sustained economic growth that would make a country's economy one of the largest and most vibrant in the world.

It is also pertinent to take into account population, not just in quantitative terms but also in terms of quality and participation in the promotion of peace and security at the global and regional levels and in economic growth and development. It is from such strengths that a country's capacity to contribute to world stability and development cooperation under multilateral auspices is derived.

An increase in the membership of the Security Council should therefore accommodate new permanent members, which should join on the basis of a combination of these and other appropriate criteria, reflecting, among other things, the new and emerging constellation of Powers and their proven regional and global responsibilities, as well as political, economic and demographic realities.

A measured and realistic expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership, coupled with reform of the working methods and practices of the Security Council, has become necessary and appropriate. In these endeavours, however, the exclusion of developing countries, through a process of predetermined selection, would be unacceptable. Enlargement should be accomplished through a process of open-ended negotiations on the basis of consensus. Reform and restructuring of the Security Council are long overdue. It is now imperative that we achieve a more representative Council.

In conclusion, my delegation deems it essential for the Open-ended Working Group to continue its task of fulfilling the mandate entrusted to it under General Assembly decision 48/498. We therefore fully support its recommendation that it should continue its work during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. As in the past, my delegation will participate constructively in the ongoing discussions, in the firm conviction that an intensified dialogue and concrete negotiations leading to compromise and consensus will be in the broader interests of all Member States.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes continued consideration at the current session of the General Assembly of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, and has carefully studied the relevant report.

We have just concluded the Special Commemorative Meeting of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The past 50 years have witnessed tremendous changes in the world as well as remarkable changes in the United Nations, whose membership has increased from the original 51 to the current 185. The international community has placed greater expectations on the United Nations. The Security Council, which shoulders major responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security, is also faced with new problems and challenges. The Chinese delegation believes that a relevant and necessary expansion of the membership and reform of the working methods of the Security Council should be carried out to enable it to cope with changes in the international situation and meet the new challenges ahead.

Under Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all United Nations Member States and therefore should be accountable to them in fulfilling its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Issues handled by the Security Council have a direct bearing on the interests of all countries, particularly those of the countries concerned and in the relevant regions. It is the general desire and request of the entire membership that necessary measures be taken to make the Council's actions and decisions better reflect the collective will of Member States and better safeguard their interests, particularly those of the developing countries, which make up an overwhelming majority of United Nations membership.

The Chinese delegation concurs with the statement in the report of the Working Group that the composition and size of an expanded Council should more accurately reflect the universality and current situation of the United

Nations. In expanding the Council, the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be particularly observed, and the representation of various regions in the Council strengthened, so as to give better play to the positive role of the developing countries and small and medium-sized countries in United Nations affairs.

The reform of the Security Council should also cover necessary improvements to the working methods of the Council to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency. First, the Council itself should establish the practice of democratic consultation, and members should refrain from imposing their will on others or applying double standards to conflicts in different regions. At the same time, the Council should increase the transparency of its work and strengthen its exchange of information and communication with non-Council members, particularly those directly concerned. This would help enhance the accuracy, effectiveness and authority of its decision-making. It also conforms to the current trend of democratizing international relations.

Thanks to the efforts of all Member States, including those on the Security Council, in recent years the Council has, on the basis of full consultations and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, adopted some specific measures to improve its working methods, with some positive results achieved. We hope that the Council will make further efforts to build on its accomplishments so far, so that its working methods can better reflect the will of the general membership, thus enabling it to carry out the mandates entrusted to it by the Charter in a more effective manner and to maintain and strengthen its positive role in international affairs in the new situation.

In recent years, all countries have attached great importance to the question of the reform of the Security Council. They have taken an active part in the relevant discussions and made some concrete suggestions. These discussions, in our view, are useful. They have enhanced understanding between States on the question of reform and helped bring about consensus on some issues. However, there are still divergent understandings and views among Member States on various specific issues concerning the reform of the Council. The suggestions made are not quite the same, and in certain areas there are fairly big differences. This shows that a serious, pragmatic and patient approach on the part of the entire membership is required to the reform of the Council if we are to continue an extensive exchange of views and seek common ground step by step. This is the only way to achieve the objective of the reform of the Council.

It is the hope of the Chinese delegation that the Open-ended Working Group will continue to work effectively during the current session of the General Assembly and to study carefully and meticulously, on the basis of previous discussions, all suggestions made by Member States so as to put forward a reform proposal acceptable to the general membership.

Mr. Keating (New Zealand): New Zealand is strongly in favour of reform of the Security Council, but, as we have said many times in the Working Group, simply changing the composition of the Council misses the point. The most important reform that must be made relates to the political culture of that body.

My comments on the expansion of the Council will be brief. We are convinced that the Working Group is now at a stalemate. It is clear that none of the alternatives for expansion of permanent membership are viable.

We believe we therefore have three options. The first is to find a graceful way to shut down this debate, put it aside for 10 or 20 years and get on with reforms that really will make a difference to the way the United Nations operates. The second is to pursue a simple expansion of non-permanent membership. The third option is to pursue a more complex political solution based on the extension of non-permanent seats only, but accomplished in a manner that will ensure that the relatively small group of major countries that are interested in regular representation on the Council at least have the possibility of election to it more often.

We believe that in the circumstances which the United Nations now faces — a financial crisis, a crisis of confidence and a desperate need for wider reform and revitalization — it is time to face up to reality.

We all have optimal positions. New Zealand, for instance, strongly believes in the elimination of the veto, and we could go on insisting in the Working Group that this position be accommodated in any Charter amendment that might be forthcoming. However, we have to face reality. Even if the Working Group did accept the New Zealand position, the political facts of life are such that we know full well that such a Charter amendment would not be ratified by all the necessary legislatures.

Similar considerations apply to other countries' optimal positions. Who really, in their heart of hearts, believes that it will be possible for a package of five new permanent members to be ratified by the necessary legislatures? If we are being honest, the answer is that no one really believes it is possible. And equally we all know that the quick-fix package of two new permanent members is simply unachievable. It cannot gain the necessary two-thirds majority.

So if we want progress we all have to put aside our optimal positions for now. That is not to say that larger reform must be abandoned forever. We will continue to hope that one day it will be possible to eliminate the veto, and others will no doubt continue to harbour hopes for other more ambitious goals. But in the short term, we have to be responsible and not prolong indefinitely a debate which, if we go on the way we are, will bring the United Nations, and all of us as negotiators, into disrepute.

We believe that we need to find acceptable middle ground that can be agreed upon in a reasonable time-frame. That means compromise. And I believe that the only realistic compromise is one that expands the non-permanent membership by a sufficient number to accommodate the interests both of the smaller States and of the larger States that want, and probably deserve, to be represented on the Council more regularly.

Let us take the opportunity in this fiftieth anniversary year to focus on what is achievable instead of visualizing pipe dreams that are beyond our current reach.

Reform of other organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the subordinate bodies: all of this is on the table in the coming year. We will need to find realistic compromise solutions in each of those areas. Is it too much to hope for a realistic compromise approach on the Security Council as well? If we are not prepared to compromise in the area of Security Council reform then it augers very badly indeed for the prospect of reform in other areas.

Finally, I want to turn to the question of the culture of the Security Council: the way it operates. As we all know, the Charter envisaged that any Member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the Member considered that its interests were specially affected.

But what happens in practice? The Security Council currently considers a large number of questions which the broader membership, even when they believe that their interests are specially affected, have no real opportunity to participate in. In fact the Council does not have discussions which are open in any meaningful way to the other Members of the United Nations. The most that can be said is that it engages in exchanges of public explanations about actions already choreographed in private. This was why, when New Zealand was recently a member of the Council, we pursued so assiduously the goal of transparency in the methods of the Security Council.

We are on record in the public debates of the Council, and in the documents and proposals we submitted to it, as considering that the Council could, and should, amend its processes so that there can be meaningful input, for instance through a working group, by Member States affected by a situation, so that neighbouring and regional States can participate in an appropriate manner and, finally, so that troop-contributing States can, as the Charter says, participate in decisions as well as in discussion of relevant issues.

The Council has made some reforms. These were welcome. But it is our impression that in recent months, on all these fronts, things have gone decisively backwards. The consultations with troop-contributing countries have become increasingly threadbare. The Council decision to enhance transparency by holding "orientation debates" seems to have been stillborn.

We call on the members of the Council — while the spirit of United Nations reform is in the air, and when the General Assembly has set up an open-ended working group to look at reform on its side of the House — to respond in a similar way. Now is not the time for the Council to pull the blanket over its head and keep on doing whatever it does in the dark. Now is the time for the Council to consider new ways and new ideas. Can we suggest that the Council establish its own high-level working group, and that the group meet in public in the Council Chamber and invite all Members of the United Nations to participate in discussion of practical measures to improve the relationship between the Council and all the rest of us?

Mr. Maximov (Bulgaria): The Bulgarian delegation joins all other delegations in expressing appreciation for the untiring and constructive efforts of Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Pibulsonggram of Thailand, Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Bulgaria shares the opinion that the ongoing discussion on reform of the Security Council in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group is of utmost importance for the future of the United Nations. We are ready to continue to make an active contribution to this important exercise. It is our strong belief that the spirit of cooperation prevailing in the international community will make it possible to reach consensus solutions enabling the Security Council to meet the challenges of the new times in the most effective and efficient way.

Mr. Huaraka (Namibia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

An enlargement of the Security Council should be aimed at enhancing its capacity in the sphere of maintenance of international peace and security. We support the search for an appropriate balance between the need for an increase in the membership of the Council -- because of the growth in the number of United Nations Member States over the years — and the requirements for effectiveness and efficiency in its work. In this process, it is necessary to ensure that the number of non-permanent members is increased in a fashion that will preserve, on the one hand, the ratio of permanent to non-permanent members, and, on the other, the broad representation of the regional groups.

In practical terms, this should ensure that States carrying considerable weight in international political and economic life, such as Germany and Japan, as well as other influential countries in regional or global terms, could assume the responsibility of permanent status in the Security Council.

An additional non-permanent seat should be allocated to the Eastern European Group. In this connection, it would be appropriate to recall that this regional group exactly doubled its membership since the last enlargement of the Security Council, in 1965, while the overall membership of the United Nations over the same period has increased from 113 to 185.

We welcome the steps undertaken by the Security Council towards improving its working methods, aimed at an increase in transparency and wider involvement of non-member States. This momentum should be furthered by devising mechanisms for taking into account the positions of neighbouring countries and States concerned at an early stage of the decision-making process. Possible contributions by regional organizations should also be envisaged, through appropriate arrangements.

The need for such consultations is most strongly felt when economic sanctions are considered. Additionally, it has become imperative to increase the transparency of the functioning of the Security Council sanctions committees.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm my country's readiness to continue to contribute actively to the important process of adapting the world Organization to the challenges confronting it, of which the reform of the Security Council is a major element.

The Acting President: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Viet Nam has requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed yesterday at noon, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of Viet Nam in the list of speakers?

I hear no objection. Viet Nam is therefore included in the list of speakers.

Mr. Takht-Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The fundamental purpose of reviewing the membership and working methods of the Security Council is twofold: to enhance the representative character of the Council and to make it more effective, transparent, legitimate and democratic. The reason for this endeavour is plain and simple: we live in a new world. The world gradually changed in the first four decades of operation of the United Nations, but it has been significantly altered in the last decade.

During the past year, in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other related matters, there has been a thorough discussion of the whole issue. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group for their tireless efforts in this difficult exercise. The final report of the Working Group, which was adopted at the end of the last session of the General Assembly, referred the work of the Group to the Assembly at its current session and accurately highlighted the fact that further in-depth consideration of the key issues is still required.

In fact, the task of reviewing the composition and working methods of the Council is a very delicate and complex one, simply because all members of the Organization would be affected in one way or another by the results, and, therefore, their participation and involvement in the process is of the utmost importance.

It is in this context that transparency in the *modus operandi* of the Working Group itself becomes extremely important, and even essential, so that there will be a sense of universality in respect of the final decision of the Working Group.

We all agree that the task before the Working Group is as important as it is difficult: it aims to reconstruct the Security Council in order to bring its activities into line with today's realities. A task of this magnitude requires strong political will to avoid haste and slipshod work throughout the process of deliberation in the Working Group. Therefore, we should not lose heart if progress in the Working Group has been slow and limited.

Reflecting the deliberations in the Working Group, the final report points out that

> "important differences continue to exist on key issues before the Open-ended Working Group". *(A/49/47, para. 16)*

In our view, reflection, deliberation, methodical work and, above all, time are needed to narrow the divergence of views on these issues. We appreciate the fact that, in the meantime, the Security Council has not been aloof to the climate of change and has taken some incremental steps to improve its working methods. We believe that such steps have been insufficient and that there is still plenty of room for improvement in the Security Council's working methods, in the light of the suggestions and proposals introduced in the Working Group and the General Assembly at its current session.

In our view, the fact that the two clusters on the agenda of the Working Group are finally a package should not be construed as meaning that progress in one cluster is technically dependent on simultaneous progress in the other. Were this to be the case, then one cluster would be held hostage by the other — a trend that should be avoided.

Holding on to privileges granted to the victors of the Second World War is no longer justifiable. Even 50 years ago, these privileges were challenged. The veto power, which permits a permanent member of the Council to defy the will and aspirations of the majority, is incompatible with the objective of democratizing the United Nations. Indeed, this power calls into question the very notion of collective security measures and their justification.

To be in line with the reform of the United Nations, the veto power should not be retained as it is now; it must be either removed or, at least, thoroughly reviewed to ensure that the decision-making procedure in the Security Council is democratic.

Finally, for the sake of brevity, my delegation has here confined itself to a few important issues. My delegation's position on different aspects of the issue under consideration has already been expressed in various meetings of the Working Group, as well as in other forums. But I would like to repeat my delegation's pledges of full cooperation in the work of the Open-ended Working Group in the future.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): I wish to start by expressing our appreciation of the fair, impartial and expeditious manner in which Ambassador Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire and his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Pibulsonggram of Thailand, conducted the comprehensive debate undertaken during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in the Open-ended Working Group on Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

We trust that under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Freitas do Amaral, the Working Group will be able to converge towards concrete results in the course of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, on the basis of the wide ground already covered. In this connection, I wish to express our strong support for the work performed under the guidance of the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Thailand as co-Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, and to stress the vital need for continuity in our deliberations.

The Working Group has now met for two consecutive years. We have before us its second report, document A/49/47, which includes a draft decision proposing that the Open-ended Working Group continue its deliberations and submit a report before the end of the fiftieth session. Our discussions point to agreement on the need to expand the Security Council and to review its working methods in a way that further strengthens its capacity and effectiveness, enhances its representative character and improves its working efficiency.

Although we have yet to reach consensus on some of the central issues under consideration, the detailed exchange of views in the Working Group itself, as well as the very useful consultations organized by the two Vice-Chairmen, have helped to clarify positions and focus our discussions.

The previous report of the Working Group had concluded that while there was a convergence of views that the membership of the Security Council should be enlarged, there was also agreement that the scope and nature of such enlargement required further discussion. Further discussion has now taken place, and the thrust of the ideas and opinions on the issues related to the Council's expansion, as well as those which might be said to fall under the heading "Other matters", have found adequate reflection in the Observations and Assessment by the Vice-Chairmen on the progress of the Working Group's activity, annexed to the report.

The observations illustrate the fact that an extensive exploration of the two clusters of issues took place during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. There should be no need to go over territory which is sufficiently well mapped. The moment has thus come for building bridges and working towards an agreement.

The Brazilian Minister of External Relations stated at the opening of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly:

> "As a catalyst for other much-needed reforms within the United Nations system, reform of the Security Council is an imperative that should no longer be put off." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 4th meeting, p. 5)*

And he added:

> "Reform is not about the individual prestige of any country but about the prestige of the Security Council itself." *(ibid)*

We agree with the President of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly that reform of the Security Council is required and urgent, as he pointed out in his thought-provoking inaugural address. Reform, however, should not be pursued for its own sake. It should serve the needs and further the interests of the international community. In our view, the kind of reform capable of meeting these requirements is one that brings greater legitimacy to the Council and enhances its capacity for effective action by making it more representative of the world we live in.

If the Security Council is to wield the political and moral authority needed for its decisions to be effectively implemented, its composition cannot be perceived by the general membership as imbalanced either in geographic terms or in terms of participation by industrialized and developing countries. If the post-cold war United Nations is to fulfil the promise of creating a true global partnership for peace, the organ responsible for safeguarding international peace and security must be perceived as equitable, both in its permanent and in its non-permanent membership.

An increase in the permanent membership of the Security Council limited to industrialized countries would not only aggravate present imbalances in regional terms, but would fail to acknowledge the increasing role played by developing countries in promoting peace and enhancing security.

International relations have undergone significant changes in the past five decades, with the emergence of new political and economic Powers with a global reach. An increase in the Council's membership that fails to deal with these realities cannot be called a reform. A reform that fails to contemplate developing countries as permanent members cannot be called equitable.

Brazil supports the draft decision included in document A/49/47, which proposes that the Working Group should continue its work, taking into consideration progress achieved during the forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions as well as the views expressed during the fiftieth session, including the Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary.

As President Fernando Henrique Cardoso declared during the Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary:

> "I ... reaffirm the Brazilian commitment to fight for a stronger, more active United Nations. This is not a new commitment, but one that reflects the history of Brazil's participation in this Organization. It has been a history of engagement, a history of the pursuit of peace and development, a history that makes us willing now to assume greater responsibilities in the deliberations of the United Nations." *(Official Records of the General*

Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 37th meeting, p. 15)

This is the spirit which will continue to orient our participation in the debate on the reform of the United Nations, and of the Security Council in particular.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): My delegation appreciates the resolve which the President of the General Assembly expressed at the outset of his presidency to give this important question his most careful attention.

The Open-ended Working Group made useful progress during the last session in preparing the groundwork for reform of the Security Council. We owe sincere gratitude to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, who steered its discussions with great skill and commitment, and we warmly thank Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Pibulsonggram. As they themselves have pointed out, much remains to be done before a comprehensive agreement can be reached among all Member States. We have the opportunity and responsibility to ensure that we make the maximum use of this fiftieth anniversary session to bring matters to a point where essential decisions to be made are clear.

I do not intend to rehearse again here the position of my delegation on the principal issues of substance. That position was made clear in a discussion paper which we submitted, together with a number of other countries, to the Open-ended Working Group at its last session. Those views are contained in section V of document A/49/965 of 18 September 1995. We have always made it clear that, based on certain fundamental points of principle, we will take a flexible attitude to various aspects of the issues as they evolve, taking full account of the views of other Members. And the representative of New Zealand has just reminded us forcefully of the virtues of this approach.

In the general debate at the outset of this fiftieth session, of the General Assembly, the *Tanaiste* and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland recalled the essentials of our approach, when he declared that the Security Council needed to be enlarged in order to increase its effectiveness and its ability to act, both clearly and unambiguously, as the expression of the common will of Member States. Enlargement should enhance the representative character of the Security Council, taking into account the emergence of new economic and political Powers as well as the increase in United Nations membership. It should also enhance equitable geographic representation and not diminish the possibility for smaller Member States to serve. Enlargement should take place in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership.

He concluded that after two years of discussion we have now reached the point where we should begin to clarify the elements of a balanced solution.

We all know that this question, because it addresses structures and procedures at the heart of the role and activities of the United Nations, requires decisions which are not simple to achieve to the satisfaction of all. At the same time, it is very clear that we need to advance reforms because there is evident dissatisfaction with matters as they stand. And as long as this situation continues — on an issue fundamental to the workings of the United Nations — we will not have the conditions of full confidence which should characterize the relationship between the Security Council and the general membership.

On the working methods of the Security Council, we should acknowledge that a number of steps have been taken over the past couple of years to improve openness and transparency in the Security Council's relationship with the wider membership. The Working Group has discussed a range of means to carry this process further. In the joint discussion paper, with which Ireland is associated, we suggested that an amendment of Article 24 of the Charter might recognize the principle of the Security Council's informing and consulting all Member States to the largest possible extent.

We suggested that the following should receive particular attention: briefings on the work of the Council by the President of the Council; open orientation debates of the Council — on this, an interesting French proposal was put forward in December 1994; improved consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries; and greater transparency in the work of sanctions committees.

The Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group have made a number of very useful suggestions for the organization of the future work of the Group during the fiftieth session. We subscribe to the approach they have outlined. In particular, we would like to see the work develop in such a way as to refine and focus views as far as possible, avoiding mere repetition; to structure the sequence of meetings to best effect; to use the momentum of the fiftieth anniversary to clarify in the months ahead the essential points on which decisions and further measures could be realized.

At the outset of the Open-ended Working Group's activity at the beginning of this year, discussions were facilitated by a questionnaire suggesting main areas that might be addressed. We would suggest that it might be helpful if, taking into account the further useful clarifications achieved during the last session, a revised questionnaire, or a similar paper, were prepared to structure the outset of further work in this session.

To conclude, it is clear that there is a widespread view that the Security Council should be enlarged to meet changing circumstances and the reality of a significantly expanded United Nations membership. If this overall objective is so widely shared, its achievement cannot be deferred indefinitely without negative effect. We hope that this session can make decisive progress, and my delegation will continue to seek to contribute to that end.

Mr. Zandamela (Mozambique): The Special Commemorative Meeting of the United Nations held last month constituted an excellent opportunity for us all, the family of the United Nations, to reaffirm our faith in the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of this Organization. In doing so, the peoples of this great family committed themselves to working together to make this institution truly the global depositary of mankind's values and aspirations.

It is within this perspective that my delegation deems it opportune to share its thoughts on the subject under consideration as we pursue the search for a common ground to attain the goals and objectives that will guide the United Nations throughout the next millennium.

The United Nations over the next millennium must consolidate the sweeping and innovative changes that are taking place across the world. It is within our power to reshape the Organization to bring it up to the dynamic condition commensurate with the challenges of a world characterized by tumultuous global changes.

The world leaders who came here to reaffirm the ideals of the founding fathers of our Organization recognized, in their wisdom, the need to reform the Organization accordingly. As President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique said in his address:

> "The reforms of the United Nations system are a logical consequence of the increase in the membership of the Organization and of the winds of democratization blowing across the world". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary meetings , 40th Meeting, p. 17)*

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council deserves thorough scrutiny in view of the lack of consensual criteria liable to embrace the political, geographical, economic and demographic interests of all Member States.

The observations and assessment of the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-Ended Working Group contained in document A/49/965 and the various proposals submitted by a number of States Members of the Organization and contained in the same document underscore the need for further consideration with a view to harmonizing the compelling interests of Member States in this crucial issue.

At this juncture, while my delegation wishes to reiterate the validity of the African Common Position on the United Nations Reforms, adopted in September last year, we likewise wish to express agreement with the view of the Non-Aligned movement, as expressed by the representative of Colombia, that in view of the important differences that continue to exist in the Open-ended Working Group, further in-depth consideration of these issues is required.

We commend, however, the work done by the Open-ended Working Group, and in particular the dedication and tireless efforts carried out by the two Vice-Chairmen. We encourage the Group to continue to such efforts. My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its readiness to cooperate with the Chairman in the difficult task of harmonizing the various interests in the issue.

In conclusion, my delegation maintains the view that the concept of democracy, accountability, transparency and so forth, augurs well for our individual countries and could also do so in the international organizations of which we enjoy full membership, particularly the United Nations. We need, therefore, to see a more democratic, a more representative and a more efficient Council based on the sacrosanct principle of the sovereign equality of all its members as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Lamptey (Ghana): When I spoke on this item last year in this Assembly, I stated that the question was the qualitative exercise of power in the Security Council. I would now like to elaborate.

We have heard the various proposals offered for the reform of the Security Council. We have noted the zeal with which some important Members of this Organization are advocating the creation of a limited number of permanent seats for those nations they consider worthy. The underrepresented regional groups, such as ours, are calling for more regionally apportioned seats and the provision of permanent seats to the groups.

Ghana has no objection to these proposals and calls. Indeed, we believe that a more balanced geographical representation in the Security Council, in the real sense of the word, is long overdue. But to understand the issue more clearly and thus be able to find a solution that would be both just and lasting, it is necessary for us to go back to the very beginnings of the Security Council and the exercise of power within that organ, as well as to the practical reality of decision-making in the General Assembly itself in the early years of the United Nations.

Let us recall that in those years, marked by an acute ideological divide in the world, the membership of the United Nations, in all its organs, favoured the Western world. The West was assured of automatic majorities in all United Nations forums. Thus it was that the Soviet Union became the "nyet" representative in the Security Council. Isolated and with its back to the wall, the Soviet Union exercised the power of the veto on every conceivable occasion, totally oblivious of the condemnation of the West and the "malignment" by a hostile international press that felt it was engaged in the reckless use of power.

But as the liberation struggle across the continents escalated and more and more subjugated peoples achieved victory and independence, the membership of the United Nations swelled and its complexion underwent a dramatic transformation. A beneficial result of this transformation was that the Soviet Union was no longer alone on every issue. The era of automatic Western majorities had passed into history. The other side of the ideological divide was also able to influence decisions and, at times, obtain favourable majority support. With this, the Soviet Union almost abandoned the use of the veto power.

Today, the United Nations is composed of 185 Member States, and one would have thought that in this milieu every nation, big or small, weak or strong, would have the assurance that its views would be heard and could influence decision-making for the greater good of the entire membership; that every State could know, *ab initio*, that it could win some and lose some; and that persuasion and compromise would be the norm in decision-making, thus making the power of the veto unnecessary, if not obsolete.

But what do we see? We see a General Assembly that is emasculated, because there are no teeth behind its legislative decisions. We see a Security Council so transformed that the publicly held deliberative process that marked it for reverence in the past is no more. Today the Security Council is forever in closed-door consultations. It has become an elitist group whose decisions are often at variance with the general will of the membership of the Organization.

Trends in this Organization and in the world today are making the peoples of the developing world here represented nostalgic for the bipolar world of yesterday. Then, at least, they could count on their voices being heard by both sides and on efforts being made to respond to their concerns. In this climate and in this context, is the further elitism of the membership of the Security Council the answer? Would the creation of more permanent seats, even if coupled with the enlargement of the Security Council to respond to regional concerns, solve the fundamental problem, which is the democratization of power? Ghana does not believe so. Let me voice our conviction that not one country here represented, including even those that now dominate the Organization, is entirely satisfied with the current situation.

One of the greatest instruments for governance in the history of man is the Constitution of the United States of America. It has ordered a basically rural agrarian society of 4 million through the years, and it turned the Union into the greatest industrial giant of modern times, with a population of over 200 million. It withstood the travail and test of a destructive Civil War. It contained the sacrifices and pain of two world wars. Its guardians have engaged in conflicts in lands far away that have not met with the approbation of the general population of the American nation, thus leading to wrenching divisiveness in the body politic. The unending struggle for social justice and racial equality makes this land a continuing battleground. But through it all the United States remains one enduring Republic. Why?

The framers of the Constitution of the United States were wise men. At the very beginning they recognized that the captain of the nation they envisaged must have awesome powers to govern a nation of many states with differing and, at times, conflicting interests. Thus they provided appropriate powers to the Commander-in-Chief. Believers in democratic government that they were, they also saw the necessity of providing the legislative arm of government with equally enormous powers to temper those of the presidency, thus ensuring that no despot would take the nation to ruin. The Constitution provided that the representatives of the people, in Congress assembled, would deliberate, make proposals and enact legislation, which must then be assented to by the President to become law. If the President feels that the action of the Congress has been influenced by the passions and demands of the moment and could be inimical to the interests of the people or of the United States in the long run, he has the power to veto the bill and make it a nullity.

Then the finer point of democracy is reached. Serious negotiations are entered into and compromises arrived at that could lead to executive and legislative agreement ensuring that a bill more nearly meets the interests of all. If, however, the Congress, representing the national will, is convinced that the President is in error, then by a two-thirds majority vote it can override the presidential veto and turn the bill into law.

Experience shows that the American people, irrespective of continuing individual reservations and unhappiness over specific decisions thus taken, are largely satisfied and willing to yield to the common will. The Constitution of the United States shows us the way to democratize decision-making in the Security Council.

If Ghana, *arguendo*, were to be made a member of the Security Council and given a permanent seat on a regional basis, its exercise of the veto power would be influenced by its national perception of the issue at hand, even if it took into consideration the views of the African Group, bearing in mind that perceptions in the Group might vary. In short, the exercise of the veto power could be only national, not regional.

An increase in the membership of the Security Council, coupled with an arrangement of permanent seats ensuring regional balance, is a move that we must all support, even if we consider it only symbolic. It is untenable that one nation can have the power to frustrate the will of an Organization of 185 Member States. The increase in the membership of the Security Council should be the first point in a two-pronged reform. The second, and perhaps the more crucial point, is to provide that the exercise of the veto power could be overridden by the votes of a set number of the members of the Security Council.

Today, even small and poor countries such as mine are sharing the heavy burdens of war and peace. Our children have served the United Nations in many lands, on many continents. The least we have a right to expect is the democratization of the United Nations organ that has responsibility for war and peace.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council remains a particularly important and significant subject in itself, and even more so in the context of the present comprehensive process of reform, democratization and restructuring of the Organization. For these reasons, allow me, first of all, to express my delegation's appreciation for the work carried out by the Open-ended Working Group charged with studying the topic and particularly for the invaluable work of its two Vice-Chairmen, the representatives of Thailand and Finland, and for the constant support of the Secretariat. We hope that future negotiations within the Working Group will enable us to meet the objectives for which the Group was established by the Assembly.

Cuba believes that the necessary restructuring of the Security Council should be in line with the realities and demands of an Organization which, 50 years after its inception, has undergone profound changes in many respects. This should be done, first and foremost, by increasing the number of its members. Member States advocate the democratization of the system, and they aspire to enjoy equal participation in all spheres of the Organization through just and equitable representation in all the organs of the system, of which the Security Council is a fundamental part.

The new realities of this Organization also call for a revitalization of the General Assembly and, above all, the re-establishment of proper links between the Assembly and the Council enabling the former to conduct the necessary supervision over the latter, in accordance with the authority conferred upon it by the Charter of the Organization. In this regard, Article 24 of the Charter still proves to be relevant and valuable. The Security Council acts on behalf of all Members of this Organization, and it is to them that it must answer. The

General Assembly, the only universal body of the United Nations, has the duty and the right to be duly informed of the Council's activities and to make whatever recommendations it considers appropriate regarding its work.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group, the subject of the debate in this meeting, contains, among its many aspects, the various proposals put forward by delegations on the criteria and numerical variants that should govern the process of providing for equitable representation in the Council and increasing its membership. The proposals include that submitted by Cuba, which is based on the consideration that modification in the number of members of the Council should be in strict application of the principle of equitable geographic distribution in all categories.

Cuba supports an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council and believes that, whatever the formula, an increase in the number of permanent members should also take account of developing countries. Otherwise, there would be a greater imbalance in the composition of the Council. New permanent members from developed and developing countries should join the Council at one and the same time.

Regarding the total number of members of the Security Council, my delegation believes that one of the numerical possibilities is a membership of 23 countries, with the distribution of new permanent members as follows: 3 seats for Asia; 2 seats for Africa, in accordance with the decision of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); 2 seats for Latin America and the Caribbean; and 1 seat for European and other States. However, we would be ready to study, with full attention and flexibility, each and every proposal made in the Open-ended Working Group, since only a thorough and complete study can lead to the necessary consensus formula that would make it possible to proceed with the expansion of the membership of the Security Council, thus enhancing its legitimacy by increasing its representativity.

The delegation of Cuba considers that the representativity of the Security Council depends not only on the composition of its membership, but also on its working methods and procedures.

During the last few years, measures have been adopted to improve the degree to which States that are not members of the Council are kept informed. However, there is still much work to be done, particularly with regard to the institutionalization of reforms in the Council's working methods and procedures. This is the only way to ensure the necessary transparency and effectiveness of that organ. In our view, it would not be right to try to pit the concept of effectiveness against those of democracy and transparency. A largely undemocratic, non-transparent Security Council is not and can never be an efficient Security Council.

Of course, in this context, we still have the remarkable and anachronistic veto right, be it overt or covert. My country's position on this subject is well known to all.

The delegation of Cuba regards the process of reforming the Security Council as a package, the negotiation of which must not be hinged or contingent on the introduction of substantive reforms of the Charter. Many of the proposed reforms could be implemented through amendment of the Council's rules of procedure or through relevant General Assembly resolutions.

However, my delegation supports the proposal made by the representative of Colombia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, concerning the examination at the Movement's eleventh summit Conference, held recently in Cartagena de Indias, of various mechanisms for restructuring the United Nations, including the possibility of convening a General Conference to review the Charter, as provided for in Article 109.

In the framework of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Working Group's mandate and the General Assembly's responsibility with regard to the process of reform and democratization of the Council are being renewed and reaffirmed.

The changed composition of this Organization calls for just and equitable representation in the Security Council. The problems of today's world cannot be solved without the democratic and active participation of all Member States, including the founding Members of the United Nations and the many States that are underrepresented in the Security Council but are, none the less, equally sovereign and equally committed to the future.

Only a Security Council that is representative in its composition, democratic in its decision-making and transparent in its procedures will be able to serve effectively the lofty purposes of the United Nations.

Mr. Koe Ntonga (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to express the views of Cameroon on agenda item 47, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", just as the speakers preceding me have expressed the views of their respective countries on this item.

This question is as old as the Charter of the United Nations, but it gained importance owing to regular and abusive use of the right of veto, which, virtually paralysing the Council and the machinery for the political settlement of disputes between States, epitomized until 1990 the period of the cold war and of East-West confrontation.

The issue is still relevant. The increase in the number of Member States to 185; the end of the cold war and the concomitant, regrettable radicalization of nationalism and group identity, which cause internal and inter-State conflicts; and the perverse effects of the economic and financial crisis on the democratization of institutions and on human rights — all these events and challenges highlight the urgent need to carry out a reform of the United Nations in general and of the Security Council in particular.

Our discussions are therefore of special interest just after the Heads of State and Government and other dignitaries and representatives of Member States, meeting here from 22 to 24 October last to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, called urgently for the Organization to be renewed in all its political, economic and socio-cultural aspects.

First raised in November 1979, during the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council was reintroduced in December 1992 and was embodied in General Assembly resolution 47/62, which was adopted by consensus. By its resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, the Assembly decided to establish an Open-ended Working Group charged with considering the question. The Working Group met several times in 1994 and has continued its work this year. We should like to express our satisfaction with the work accomplished thanks to the perspicacity and insight of the Chairman and members of the Working Group.

Without prejudice to the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations, my delegation would like to reiterate Cameroon's position on this entire question.

Any reform of the United Nations — particularly of the Security Council — depends, first and foremost, on the political will of Member States and on their commitment to undertake reforms and to apply the measures adopted by the General Assembly to that end. Moreover, because of the increase in the membership of the Organization — which now stands at 185 Members, compared with 113 in 1963 and 51 in 1945, while the number of Security Council members, originally 11, is now 15 — it is important to alter the membership of the Council to make it more representative of the international community.

Indeed, the equitable representation on the Council that we so desire must be in keeping with the principles of sovereign equality of Member States and of equitable geographical distribution, which are enshrined in the United Nations Charter. In this regard, Cameroon wishes to reaffirm that, whatever formula is adopted, Africa should be represented by two additional members, one in each category of Council membership.

It is obvious that any restructuring of the Security Council must include greater transparency in its working methods and an improvement in its relations with other bodies, the General Assembly in particular. The proposals on this subject made and submitted to the Working Group by the African Group and the non-aligned countries deserve the General Assembly's special attention.

However that may be, Cameroon — whose firm political will and unshakeable faith in the noble ideals of the United Nations were reaffirmed on 24 October from this rostrum by His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon — remains convinced that all the aspects of this important question will be considered and that consensus solutions will be found in accordance with the spirit of mutual understanding, dialogue and wise compromise that in recent years has marked the work of our Organization and characterizes international relations today.

Mr. Tejera-París (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Venezuela attaches great importance to the issue we are addressing today. We have stated our position on many occasions, stressing the need to seek more democratic approaches to the functions, powers and composition of the Security Council.

In this respect, we support the current restructuring process and specifically recognize the work of the Open-ended Working Group that has been considering the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Its report reflects the Group's consensus on the need to expand the Security Council's membership and to review its working methods, although the proposals to that effect vary widely.

Venezuela unreservedly supports the expansion of the Security Council. We have already stated our position on the modalities and scope of that expansion. The composition of the Security Council must be changed to reflect the increase in the membership of the United Nations and to correct imbalances between the regional groups. We support an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent seats in order to establish a more proportional and representative relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. In this respect, we have expressed our support for a possible candidacy, that of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

During the Group's deliberations, other proposals have been made that are of great interest to our country. Moreover, we could possibly support the proposal made by the delegation of Italy, or a similar proposal, to establish a more frequent rotation of non-permanent members and an additional rotation that would guarantee a seat on the Council to those countries that have yet to be members of that organ.

As to the veto power, we reaffirm the position we have held since 1945, that it must be eliminated or regulated.

On other aspects that have been addressed, we concur with other countries that it is essential that we revise the rules of procedure concerning the Council's working methods in order to increase "transparency", as the current expression has it. For example, during his presidency of the Council, our colleague from Argentina initiated a daily briefing on the Council's work. We welcome this and other measures that the Council has adopted to increase its effectiveness, as well as the initiatives of other colleagues. Nevertheless, the reforms must go beyond the merely procedural or descriptive. It will be useless to increase transparency if the general public is unable to detect anything through the window-pane that is solid, just or respectful of the principles of the Charter.

Mr. Yassin (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to pay tribute to the efforts of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters.

We also wish to note the remarks, assessments and discussion papers available to us. We hope that these efforts will mark a starting-point in the process of reforming the Security Council and enhancing its desired role in the maintenance of international peace and security to allow it to cope with the new realities of our world today.

Any discussion of the strengthening of the role of the United Nations will be complete only if we address equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, as well as its composition and size, the principle guidelines for these, the proposed new types and categories of membership, qualifications for membership, methods for selecting members in every category and the overall size of an expanded Security Council.

The desired reform of the Security Council should be viewed in the light of the continued increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially from developing countries, and of the significant changes in international relations. It is worth noting that 79 Members of the United Nations have never sat on the Security Council and that 44 other countries have been elected once only. What is more, almost all these 123 Member States are developing countries, mostly from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

We see this as irrefutable evidence that Members of the United Nations do not have equal opportunities to work on the Security Council. Certain major States or advanced States are often re-elected. This means that the Security Council's membership is limited to some 28 per cent of the total membership of the United Nations. In one view it is unacceptable to try and entrench such a situation which virtually excludes members of the Non-Aligned Movement and developing countries, including the countries of Africa, from membership of the Security Council while the Council is supposed to act on behalf of all the Members of the United Nations. Unless the Council's activities are based on the broadest possible support and on equitable representation, its resolutions will not enjoy world-wide respect and, therefore, will not be effective.

The question of reforming the Security Council is critical to strengthening the United Nations, and is essential in responding to challenges in the international arena. My delegation shares the views of the representative of Colombia who, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement called for the sort of balanced and equitable representation on the Council that would respond to the new realities and rise to the challenges of our times.

It is important that more serious consideration be given to the fact that certain countries tend to exercise some influence over the Security Council by virtue of the special status they enjoy on account of their right of veto. Therefore, any reform should reflect the interests of every Member State within the framework of the interests of the international community as a whole. Such reform should fully take into account the aspirations and interests of the developing countries in a manner that would enhance the capabilities and effectiveness of the Security Council, promote its representative nature, and improve its efficiency by heeding the following elements: first, the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations; second, equitable geographical representation; third, transparency in the decision-making process.

It might be useful in this context to stress the need to always focus on listening directly to the parties concerned. Perhaps the Council should listen in a formal meeting to the view of the United Nations Member States and conduct discussions with the countries concerned before it adopts resolutions on major items on its agenda. This should not, by any means, be a substitute for the Council's informal consultations, although we think that the present undue emphasis on these can lead to the marginalization of most Member States. It is necessary for the Council's rules of procedure above all to ensure transparency, and to promote this transparency the President of the Security Council could keep Chairmen of the regional groups informed in a systematic way about the Council's programme for the month and could issue brief reports following informal consultations.

The reforms we seek ought also to address other deficiencies in the Council's methods of work especially with respect to: defining in a transparent manner the nature of the issues before the Council; objective and effective review of the right of veto in such a way as to uphold the principle of democracy; and review of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, and revitalization of recent measures to strengthen that relationship and to improve the Council's working methods and procedures so as to enhance the Council's ability to fulfil its Charter mandate. Rectifying some of the imbalances in the composition of the Security Council is a collective responsibility that demands intensive and concerted efforts to ensure that the imbalances are addressed in a comprehensive fashion that would ensure the Council's credibility.

It is a well-known fact that all five permanent members of the Security Council belong to the northern hemisphere; any real reform of the Security Council must consider the question of the right of veto enjoyed by some members of the Council. In many instances, the veto poses a threat to the decision-making process; some members tend to use it in a non-democratic manner that runs counter to the principle of the sovereign equality of Member States.

The desired reform of the Security Council must be considered with the utmost care. It would not be wise to set artificial deadlines for the conclusion of this ongoing effort. There are so many things to do before we arrive at overall agreement amongst all Member States. Discussions thus far have revealed that many differences still exist on major issues before the Working Group. There is a continuing need for in-depth consideration of such matters. Expansion of the Security Council should be viewed in the framework of overall reform. Increase in the membership of the Security Council, improving its methods of work and other related matters should be considered as an integral whole: agreement should be reached on all matters relating to reform simultaneously. However, this should not impede progress in any area.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for the meeting.

Several representatives have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): In his statement this morning the representative of Libya challenged France, even if he did not name it, asserting that it was acting as a colonial Power with respect to certain Territories. My delegation strongly rejects the use of such language with regard to the situation of French Territories and Departments, which repeatedly reaffirm, through democratic procedures, their commitment to their status within the French Republic.

Mr. Manley (United Kingdom): I too wish to respond to comments made this morning by the

Permanent Representative of Libya. The British delegation does not accept the Libyan Ambassador's anachronistic view of Britain's relationship with its dependent Territories, or his false claims regarding the bombings of the Pan Am and UTA flights. Libya is well aware of what it needs to do to enable the Security Council to lift the sanctions imposed upon it.

Mr. Keene (United States of America): I take the floor to offer my Government's full support for the statements made by my French and British colleagues.

The remarks made today by the Libyan representative are but the latest episode in a campaign to try to distract attention from its own international obligations. These obligations were imposed on Libya by the Security Council; they are clear and unchanged. It would be a waste of this body's time for me to offer a point-by-point refutation of the charges we heard earlier today from the Libyan representative.

The facts on such matters as the status of Guam and the Virgin Islands speak for themselves. What we were really witness to this morning was yet another Libyan effort to divert attention from its own record of terrorism and from its own non-compliance with the will of the international community, as expressed in binding Security Council resolutions.

The sooner Libya takes the necessary steps to meet these obligations, the better.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): First, regarding what I said earlier today on the item under consideration when I referred to the question of the veto power and our criticism of this power, such criticism has been on record for a long time. I said also that there are certain Powers which enjoy the veto privilege while they continue to occupy the territories of others. If there is any objection to what I have said in this respect, I should like to refer those who object to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee and, specifically, to document A/50/23, which is more eloquent than any amount of talk.

Secondly, regarding what was referred to by the delegation of the United Kingdom and the delegation of the United States namely, that these allegations which, according to them, we make in order to divert attention from what they call Libya's record which, they say, is one of terrorism, we think that all countries of the world, Members of this Assembly know full well the real reason which put us at the mercy of the Security Council. If it were not for the tyranny and arrogance of power, a problem like that of Lockerbie could not have been brought to the United Nations. This is a problem which we ourselves, as well as many other countries, have been exposed to, as many planes have been destroyed, sometimes by certain well-known States and responsible authorities. However, such problems have never been brought to the United Nations.

As regards the Pan Am problem, my country, up to this very moment, has not been found guilty of anything. All we have heard in relation to that incident is a suspicion that two Libyan Nationals might have been involved in the incident. No court has made any judgment yet. The way the three Western countries have sentenced my country has to do, first of all, with the arrogance of power and hegemony and with the old mentality that prevailed in the past, especially in the cold war era.

My country, as most members of this Assembly know, especially those who only yesterday were languishing under the yoke of colonialism, colonialism that most certainly was not Libyan, know that my country has never made a secret of the fact that it was giving them a helping hand. Indeed, we pride ourselves on the fact that many of the countries of our African continent have gained their independence with the help of the positive and considerable assistance extended to them. Thanks be to God, the peoples of those countries have gained their independence and their freedom.

As for the accusations that are being levelled at my country, the aim is to bring my country's political system to its knees and to impose upon us the choices of others. This will never be. The people of Libya have suffered under colonialism, have experienced displacement and have been victims to killings and humiliation. The people of my country have paid for their freedom with the lives of more than half their number. No one will be able to bring such a people to their knees. We believe that the solutions included in the Charter of the United Nations, especially under Chapter 6, could have solved any problem such as that of Lockerbie quite easily.

The solution lies in a fair above-board trial. We have no objection to sending the two suspects, tomorrow, to a fair and objective court. We agree to the trial under Scottish laws and before Scottish judges but at the seat of the International Court of Justice or at any other neutral place, away from the pressures, in order for the truth to be known. We are sure that then and only then will the truth be known.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations

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General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

Official Records

60th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 15 November 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 47 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Half a century has passed since the United Nations was founded with the noble mission of maintaining world peace and security. However, the United Nations has not yet realized humanity's desire for a free, peaceful and new world, but has been confronted with a number of challenges.

Even after the end of the cold war, the world has been witnessing increased conflicts taking place in different parts of the world. Several years have passed since Member States began to discuss the issue of reforming the United Nations — which is partially responsible for the ongoing conflicts — to make it a democratic and fair Organization, but the discussion still fails to achieve the desired results.

Humanity is now expressing disappointment and uneasiness over its future. Today's reality demands that Member States, more than ever before, resolve urgently the issue of restructuring the Security Council, the issue that constitutes a key to enhancing the role of the United Nations, which is responsible for the maintenance of peace and security.

During the past 50 years, great changes have taken place in the international arena, including a threefold increase in the membership of the United Nations. However, the Security Council continues to retain its outdated structure and to undertake its activities on the basis of the old thinking of the cold war era. This phenomenon has been impeding the progressive development of the United Nations for an excessively long period.

Recently the United Nations Member States have been showing an ever increasing enthusiasm for the restructuring of the Security Council. Accordingly, the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the restructuring of the Council have been taking place in a more detailed and active manner. This is a progressive and positive development indeed.

In the efforts to restructure the Security Council's great attention should be given to expanding the Council's membership to reflect the will and interests of the developing countries, in conformity with the present reality characterized by the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially of developing countries. One of the key points in the expansion of the Security Council's membership is to accord priority to the developing countries and to apply the principle of equal regional distribution, giving due consideration to the number of countries in each region.

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Since no agreement has been reached so far among Member States on the issue of the permanent membership of the Security Council, it is reasonable to achieve consensus first on an increase in the number of non-permanent members at this stage. In this connection, we propose that 11 seats be added to the non-permanent membership. This would increase the Council's membership to 26 seats, ensuring seven seats for Asia, Africa, and Eastern and Western Europe respectively, and five seats for the Latin America and Caribbean region.

A country like Japan, which has neither reflected in a sincere manner upon nor intended to liquidate its past crimes committed against other countries, is not entitled to become a permanent member of the Security Council.

Also important in the restructuring of the Security Council is to improve its working methods and procedures in order to ensure transparency and democracy in its work. The power and authority of the United Nations Security Council should be curtailed, while the General Assembly should be given more power, and open access should be available to all the work of the Council, including its informal consultations.

For a resolution adopted by the Security Council on behalf of the United Nations that calls for sanctions or the use of force against Member States to come into force, it would have to be approved by more than two thirds of the Member States in the General Assembly. The ban on immediate re-election of non-permanent members should be maintained, to enable all Member States to have an equal opportunity to become Security Council members and play a role of responsibility.

Another point is to abrogate the veto rights of the permanent members of the Security Council. The removal of the veto system would remove the major stumbling-block to the democratization of the United Nations and the elimination of the legacies of the cold war era that have encouraged hegemonistic and high-handed actions by a minority of big Powers. In this regard, we also give positive consideration, in the meantime, to the proposals put forward by some Member States to either limit or diminish the scope and use of the veto.

We should no longer allow ourselves to waste time with impracticable arguments about the restructuring of the Security Council, but take more effective and substantial steps aimed at reforming the United Nations into a democratic and fair Organization so that Member States can benefit therefrom.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains fully committed to playing an active role in enabling the United Nations to fulfil the noble mission enshrined in its Charter.

Mr. Blukis (Latvia): I will deliver a statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Latvia, Ambassador Baumanis, who is unable to be here at this time.

We are considering today the report of the Open-ended Working Group and the compendium prepared by the two Vice-Chairmen of the Group. The two documents constitute a very useful summary of the current status of the debate on the reform of the Security Council. The Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Essy, President of the forty-ninth session, and especially the two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Breitenstein and Mr. Pibulsonggram, who is in the Chair today, deserve our deep gratitude for the compendium and for the competent, patient and untiring leadership of the Working Group under trying circumstances.

Although initiatives to reform the Security Council have a history that is as long as the history of the United Nations itself, the current intense effort to reform the Security Council is the result of the end of the cold war.

The items in the current package of Security Council reforms have been divided into two clusters. The first cluster contains all aspects of changing the size and composition of the Security Council, as well as the question of the veto. The second cluster covers the working methods of the Council, including the relationships of the Council with interested Member States and other United Nations organs. This statement is intended to contribute to the debate on some items in both clusters, beginning with the second.

Appropriately, some reforms of the working methods of the Security Council, including increased transparency, have been initiated and carried out by the Council itself, in particular its Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters. Latvia believes that the movement towards greater transparency and improvement of working methods must continue in order to maintain, and perhaps even improve, the effectiveness of the Council.

With regard to the first cluster, it is the General Assembly that must agree on changes in the size and composition of the Security Council. At present, the only preliminary agreement reached is that the Security Council has to be expanded. It appears that agreement on the composition of the Council, as well as on the right to veto, will require time.

The Member States have a collective responsibility to explore whether the current partial agreement could serve as a starting-point for reaching a consensus on a long-term, multi-stage procedure for expanding and changing the composition of the Security Council. It would be most essential for reaching consensus that during the first stage of the expansion procedure Member States would not need to make permanent and irreversible commitments on the two controversial issues — the composition of the Council and use of the veto.

The Security Council's expansion during the first stage would be modest. It would be a positive response to the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations since 1965. It would mean improved compliance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. A probable and, in Latvia's view, a desirable consequence of the improved compliance would be the strengthening of the global decision-making role of small States and developing countries.

Latvia intends to make a more detailed proposal to the Open-ended Working Group regarding the aforementioned procedure.

There are objective reasons why it might be appropriate to take a long-range view of reforms leading to an expanded Security Council, especially in regard to the controversial issues.

The first reason is historical. The essential characteristics of the composition of the Council, as well as the veto, reflect international security needs as they were perceived at the end of the Second World War. These perceptions foresaw a special role for the major Power victors. They did not take into account the possibility of the cold war, which began within a few years of the end of the Second World War. Yet it was during the cold war that the Council was tested and found useful.

This does not mean that at this point in time we can clearly see what kind of Council will be useful in a post-cold-war world. It is too early to foretell the shape of that world and therefore to make a determination for the long term of the composition of an effective Security Council and the possible uses of the veto.

A second reason is basic to the historical process. The world keeps changing, and the Security Council needs to adapt slowly and pragmatically to this changing world in order to remain effective. A long-term and flexible approach to Security Council reform is appropriate for a mature United Nations and in the interest of all Member States that have agreed on the need to maintain an effective Security Council.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation has consistently based its position on the view that the question of the expansion of the membership of the Security Council should be considered in the context of the general task of adapting the United Nations to contemporary realities.

Having demonstrated the effectiveness and viability of a genuinely universal and leading mechanism of multilateral cooperation, the United Nations is operating today in a new international context, which it would have been difficult for the founders of the Organization to imagine. Clearly, the membership of the Security Council, like that of the entire United Nations system, should reflect the far-reaching changes that have occurred in the world in the past half-century. This is not an end in itself, however, but a stage in the strengthening of the role and effectiveness of the Council, which under the Charter bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In recent years, the Security Council, for the first time in many decades has been carrying out this very difficult mission energetically and fruitfully. It has to its credit a number of successful United Nations peace-keeping operations and numerous important decisions aimed at conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the strengthening of stability and security in various regions of the world. Among the members of the Security Council there are relations of positive and resolute cooperation in the joint and constructive search for optimum solutions to complex world problems.

That is why we attach high priority to the consideration of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council in a business-like and constructive atmosphere, with an extremely thorough and expert review of the political, organizational and procedural aspects of this multifaceted problem. In the view of the present complex transitional developments in the international system, we cannot allow any erosion or weakening of a mechanism that on the whole is successfully carrying out its functions.

In the opinion of the Russian Federation, the strengthening of the Security Council's effectiveness and its ability to respond speedily and effectively to new threats to international peace and security are essential, fundamental requirements for resolving the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council.

Russia recognizes the need for a limited expansion of the membership of the Council — up to 20 members — which would make it possible to preserve its compact nature, which is important for its efficiency.

Taking into account the interests of all regions, it is important to be guided by the criteria of membership in the Security Council enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Under those criteria, due regards must be specially paid, in the first instance, to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical representation. Clearly, the present status of the permanent members of the Security Council, as regards the full, organic relationship between their rights and duties, must remain unchanged.

At the same time, we support the proposal by a number of States to remove the provision in paragraph 2 of Article 23 of the Charter of the United Nations that retiring members of the Council shall not be eligible for immediate re-election upon the completion of their term.

We recognize the real need for broad reliance by the Security Council on the views of all Member States of the United Nations in its decision-making process, and we think that greater use should be made of the possibilities offered by the Charter of the United Nations in this respect. It is noteworthy that a number of important steps have been taken by the Security Council itself in this direction in the Working Group on procedures and working methods of the Council. Substantive decisions have been taken there to enhance transparency in the Council. Working contacts have grown closer between Council members and troop-contributing countries in practical matters related to peace-keeping operations. The President of the Security Council has become more "accessible" to other Members of the United Nations, and there have been more frequent official meetings of the Security Council for an exchange of views on key issues, with the participation of other Members of the United Nations. We believe that the useful efforts in this direction should be continued.

We remain convinced that in further refining the Security Council's methods and procedures we should proceed in stages and in a balanced manner, without hasty or precipitate decisions. All practical steps should be developed and implemented on the basis of consensus, and they should be introduced only after such innovations have been duly approved and accepted.

Russia gives high marks to the results of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. In our opinion, proof of the progress made by the Working Group is the clear awareness by Member States of the complexity of this multifaceted problem, their understanding that there can be no solution without consensus and without a balance of interests and broad and constructive cooperation.

We support the detailed and thorough report of the Working Group, which provides a solid basis for the further quest for agreement. We are very grateful to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, the Permanent Representative of Finland and the Permanent Representative of Thailand, and to the latter's predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Singapore, for their very active and productive contribution to our common interests.

The delegation of the Russian Federation intends in the future to continue fully to promote practical progress in the work of the Working Group, in the context of its mandate.

Mr. Matiko (United Republic of Tanzania): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to express our appreciation to the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, Ambassador Essy, as well as to its two Vice-Chairmen, the Ambassadors of Finland and Thailand, for the Working Group's well-balanced report. We are pleased to note that, so far, the report has guided us well and facilitated our deliberations on the subject at hand.

A broad consensus now exists in this Assembly on the need to reform and revitalize the Security Council. That, to us, is a step forward. There is broad consensus on the need to expand the membership of the Security Council on the basis of, *inter alia*, equitable geographical distribution. What we need to do now is deliberate on the modalities of how we are going to enlarge the composition of the Security Council so as to achieve more equitable representation and on the extent to which the Security Council can be democratized without sacrificing efficiency and equality. My delegation is strongly convinced today, as it was in the past, that increasing the size of the Council is one of the most obvious ways of ensuring that more of the membership of the United Nations is equitably represented in the Security Council. The process, however, should not end there. Increased membership should go hand in hand with the increased representation of interests, especially of those countries which hitherto have not been well represented in the Council. In this connection, my delegation reiterates the need for developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean to be adequately represented in the Council.

The Charter confers on the Security Council the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is clear that in fulfilling its mandate, the Security Council acts on behalf of Member States of the United Nations. It follows, therefore, that decisions of the Security Council are binding on all Member States. However, over the years, it has become increasingly clear that the Security Council seldom pays attention to the views of Member States outside the Council; nor are their views adequately taken into consideration when the Council deliberates on important matters. The upshot of this is that important decisions are being taken by a few permanent members, thus alienating the majority of the Member States that are outside the Council. We therefore call for more transparency in the way the Council conducts its work. As my delegation stated in the Assembly last month, during the general debate, there must be a regularized system of reporting to, and consultation with, the General Assembly so as to give the wider United Nations membership a sense of participation in the work of the Council.

While we call for increased membership in the Security Council, we do not support veto power. My delegation has always been opposed to it. In our opinion, the maintenance of veto power is contrary to the spirit of democratization, which we think must inspire the new era of our Organization. The veto power is a relic of the past and has outlived it usefulness. It should therefore be abolished, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, which advocates the sovereign equality of all Member States, large or small, wealthy or economically challenged. The United Nations exists for all humankind, and this needs to be reflected in all the organs of the Organization, especially the Security Council.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our support for the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which advocates the reform and expansion of the Security Council being considered as an integral part of a common package, taking into account the principle of sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democratization.

Mr. Huaraka (Namibia): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made from this rostrum on this item by the Ambassador of Colombia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters" has been under consideration since 1993. During the forty-ninth session, the Open-ended Working Group on the matter, chaired by the President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, who was assisted effectively by the two Vice-Chairmen, the Ambassadors of Finland and Thailand, held numerous meetings in which the issue was extensively debated. But despite all that, no common position could be reached. It must be acknowledged that the deliberations have been serious and frank, for this is a question of deep concern to all States Members of the United Nations, big and small, developed and developing, because the reform of the Security Council will determine the credibility, universality and legitimacy of our Organization.

The issue at hand, as my delegation sees it, is not about merely accommodating one or two States, but about transforming the Council. The Security Council cannot be fossilized in the vision and concepts of 1945. It must acquire a vision and focus for the twenty-first century. The geopolitical situation of 1945 is totally different from that of our times. The concept of colonies, prevalent and accepted then, has been totally rejected, and almost all former colonies are now sovereign States and Members of the United Nations. Military blocs are no longer central to national security and defence. The demise of the cold war and the globalization of the world have rendered security based on military blocs and alliances no longer acceptable.

In 1945 the founders of the United Nations perceived international peace and security from the menacing viewpoint of the Second World War, when Nazism, fascism and totalitarian autocratic nationalism had wreaked havoc on their peace and security, as well as their perception of the world. As a result, they gave us a United Nations that was based on military alliance and trusteeship for Non-Self-Governing Territories and peoples. Needless to say, that is not the geopolitical situation of 1995. Ours is centred on world trade, economic groupings, protection of the environment, the safeguarding of the common heritage of mankind and the eradication of poverty and diseases. These are the realities and concerns of our time.

Reform and restructuring of the Security Council and, for that matter, of the United Nations as a whole must transform the vision, the philosophy and the focus of the Council. Thus, military power should not be the sole criterion for international authority, as was the case in 1945. Means of protecting the environment — the common heritage of mankind — are equally important. It is therefore the view of the Namibian delegation that what is needed is a thorough review of the Council.

It is obvious that the Security Council, as constituted in 1995, is totally unrepresentative of the States Members of the Organization and is thus undemocratic. And decisions made by an undemocratic organ lack legitimacy.

Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are unrepresented in the permanent membership of the Council, and Asia is underrepresented, whereas Western Europe and other areas are overrepresented. Reform must redress this unacceptable imbalance.

Namibia has repeatedly stated that the veto power is a completely obsolete concept, which should be done away with. As we have stated, the conceptual basis for the veto is no longer relevant.

My delegation hopes that the ongoing consideration of this question in the Open-ended Working Group during the fiftieth session will not be narrowly focused. And it must be emphasized that equitable geographic representation, transparency, accountability, democratization and the sovereign equality of States are principles which remain central to reform and restructuring of the Security Council.

Only by putting these principles into practice can we create an organ that will take the international community into the next millennium.

Mr. Eteffa (Ethiopia): I should like, first, to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session and Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand, on their excellent leadership and on their concise and comprehensive report and observations.

We are especially delighted to note that, with the active participation and increased interest of Member States, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has now acquired its well-deserved significance. We hope that the consideration and debate at the current session will not only throw further light on the subject but also result in practical steps that will clearly advance the process of reforming and expanding the Council, especially in a manner that truly reflects equitable representation and enhances the legitimacy of its decisions.

While it is not necessary to reiterate here my delegation's position and arguments concerning the need for and urgency of reform and revitalization of the Security Council, it is none the less useful to mention — if only for the sake of emphasis — several of these viewpoints.

Reform is important if the Council is to retain its credibility and legitimacy as the United Nations organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. It would also be in conformity with the democratization process that the international community yearns to see manifested in the United Nations — a process ensuring broad participation by all its members in the activities of the Council.

More important, expansion of the Security Council would ensure that no indignation was harboured by Member States on grounds of real or perceived exclusion from the affairs of the Council. After all, as article 24 of the Charter says,

> "the Security Council acts on their behalf".

But it does so only when it discharges its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security in a manner consistent with the letter and spirit of the Charter.

My delegation has carefully studied the various submissions of Member States. We are delighted that the subject has given rise to many and varied perceptions, interpretations and orientations. However, running through the various arguments is recognition of the urgent need for expansion and reform of the Council. As to how to achieve this, the international community agreed to disagree and decided that the discussions should be continued, with renewed vigour and determination — not repeating past positions and arguments, because there is nothing to be gained from such repetition, but trying to come up with new understanding and vision. In the meantime, however, the Security Council should aim at greater transparency and accountability.

We should therefore seize the momentum and take advantage of the international support for change and reform of the Council. It is evidently important that the Council be increased in size to reflect both the geographical and the demographic configuration of our world, as well as the economic and political realities. Basically, the principles of reform and change in the Security Council must reflect global demands and expectations for inclusiveness and democracy. In other words, the reform process must be holistic in conception and in execution. Any reform of the Council which merely fulfils the aspirations of some and leaves others in suspension risks creating additional difficulties of credibility and transparency.

In our delegation's view, reform and restructuring of the Security Council is not only concerned with expansion of its membership but is also linked with the whole set of other questions and measures that could be taken to strengthen and revitalize it, especially in the face of changing global realities. In this connection, while the measures undertaken by the Council to make its work transparent are commendable, much remains to be done to address the question of transparency in a fundamental way. It is therefore anticipated that any measures undertaken to reform the Council should include those that would enable Member States to make contributions in respect of vital issues under consideration when the Council is taking decisions on matters affecting them.

An expanded Security Council should act decisively and in a timely fashion. However, one should not necessarily equate efficiency with smaller numbers. Efficiency results from all actors cooperating fully and sharing responsibilities, as appropriate, to achieve a specific objective. This essentially involves enhancing the trust and confidence of the Member States in the Council.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is prepared to discuss any proposal on criteria for new members, though we maintain that a key criterion for new membership should be equitable geographical representation. This is one of the most basic democratic criteria for membership of any organ of the United Nations, including the Security Council.

In this connection, as a representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, I would like to point out that Africa will continue dialogue with the rest of the international community to explore all viable options and the most effective and acceptable way of reforming the Security Council so that democratization, transparency and efficiency are enhanced as it deals with international peace and security. In working towards the fulfilment of the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, Africa, along with the rest of the international community, will make relentless efforts with renewed vigour and determination to make the Security Council a genuinely global entity. The complexity of global security problems and the need to respond in time and effectively are more compelling today than ever before. Africans will act with others to respond to these challenges in the belief that collective security is more than just the absence of war.

We believe that any increase in the membership of the Security Council should also be accompanied by the greater involvement and participation of non-members in the Council's decision-making process through improved coordination and consultation on international peace and security matters between the Council and the General Assembly. This would lead to greater balance in the work of these bodies on international peace and security issues.

All United Nations Member States should engage in the discussion of this issue with a certain degree of broad-mindedness, a spirit of compromise and a willingness to work towards consensus. Whilst each Member State has to protect its national interests, this approach needs to include an appreciation of the broader interests of the global community as a whole. In an era when most things are dealt with from the vantage point of national interest, moral and ethical forces should not be forgotten. Important as national interest might be, universal principles should be upheld. To insist inflexibly on discussing only some issues and not others is a sure recipe for paralysis.

In our view, the discussions must necessarily examine an increase in membership as well as other matters related to the Security Council, such as those pertaining to its procedures and working methods and its relationship with other organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly. The relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council is one of the most important areas clearly requiring improvement.

The active role and participation of the General Assembly, as the most representative organ of the United Nations with almost universal membership, in matters relating to international peace and security are indispensable. To ensure that participation and active role, it is essential to enhance cooperation, consultation and coordination between the Security Council and the General Assembly. We believe that this objective could be achieved if the Security Council were to adopt certain procedural and institutional mechanisms whereby the potential, mandate and comparative advantage of the General Assembly could be fully explored and utilized, even if this should require a revision of the Charter in some cases.

Cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations is, indeed, one of the most important issues that this reform of the Council is expected to address appropriately. The experience gained over the past few years clearly indicates that regional and subregional arrangements could serve as reliable partners and play an effective role in the maintenance of international peace and security, which includes peace-keeping, peacemaking, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict confidence-building mechanisms.

Taking into account the specific mandate and characteristics of each regional or subregional organization, the method of work and procedures relating to cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations should be improved to enhance greater coordination, consultation and genuine partnership.

The year 1995, during which the United Nations is commemorating its fiftieth anniversary, would appear to have a special significance. It does not take very long to determine that an idea is good and worthy of implementation if there is the necessary political will or disposition. Now, at 50, our Organization is an institution mature enough to make wise decisions with positive and far-reaching impact. The United Nations, at its fiftieth anniversary, cannot afford to be an institution that runs short of the wisdom, political will and commitment necessary to revitalize and strengthen itself. We must deliver on the expectations of the overwhelming majority of States Members of our Organization. Now is the time to begin, with a determination to succeed in the worthwhile endeavour of making our planet a peaceful place for everyone.

Mrs. Hoang Thi Cu (Viet Nam): I am very happy to see you, Sir, guiding the deliberations on this important agenda item, "Question of equitable representation on and the increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". I wish to thank the Chairman and especially the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group for their outstanding contributions to the work of the Working Group at the forty-ninth session.

Viet Nam is of the view that, given the speed and scope of the changes taking place in the world, it is imperative that the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular be reformed. Our position in this regard was set out in the statement made by our President, Mr. Le Duc Anh, at the Special Commemorative Meeting for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations:

> "In order to discharge its mission successfully, the United Nations itself should be revitalized. First and foremost, it should be turned into a democratic organization in which relations among Member States as well as between the United Nations and each Member State are based on democracy and equality." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 37th meeting, p. 16)*

Our delegation fully associates itself with the statement made in the debate on this item by the Permanent Representative of Colombia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Here I wish to reiterate some points that are of great interest to us.

The reform and expansion of the Security Council should be considered as integral parts of a single package. To attain a solution to these issues, we should take into account the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographic distribution, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democratization in the working methods of the Security Council, including in its decision-making process.

We support the proposals submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement to the Working Group on Security Council reform. The question of the expansion of the Security Council should be addressed in a comprehensive way in order to improve the Council's credibility and thus reflect the universal character of the world Organization. We share the view expressed by many non-aligned and developing countries that it is essential to duly increase the proportion of Security Council members that belong to the Movement or that are developing countries. Any attempt to exclude non-aligned and developing countries from an expansion in the membership of the Security Council would be unacceptable. Any enlargement of the Security Council should be focused on correcting existing imbalances in the Council's present composition and on reflecting the universal character of the world Organization.

On the criteria for selecting new permanent members, we deem it necessary to take into account a number of elements such as contributions to the United Nations system, population size, potential for a regional and global role and so forth.

We support the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group contained in document A/49/47. Our delegation assures the Assembly that it will participate actively in the work of the Working Group during this session.

Mr. Agathocleous (Cyprus): The Cyprus delegation believes that the item under consideration, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", should be seen not in isolation, but within the context of the overall reform of the United Nations with the purpose of strengthening our Organization to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The drafters of the San Francisco Charter were inspired not only by idealism but also by pragmatism in their endeavour to create a world that would be spared from further international conflicts and wars. In general it can be said that the principles of the Charter have stood the test of time. Their application, however, leaves much to be desired, as these principles have not always been universally adhered to or applied.

Since San Francisco, the world has been transformed. Cyprus stands for a strong, democratic and effective United Nations. We want to see its purposes, principles and edicts fully respected by all. That is why the United Nations Charter forms the backbone of our foreign policy and the beacon of our international endeavours.

The credibility of the United Nations will continue in the future to be judged to a large extent by the Organization's role in the maintenance of international peace and security, a matter for which the Security Council has primary responsibility. Through the concept of collective security and the effective use of existing provisions of the Charter, especially those of Chapter VI and Chapter VII, the United Nations can, and must, meet the mandate of mankind. But in this respect there is an urgent need for the full utilization of these provisions and for the strengthening and restructuring of the Security Council and the reform of its working methods. For never in the history of mankind have so many demands been made upon the United Nations and the Security Council. The Security Council no longer reflects the size and composition of the United Nations membership, which has increased from 51 Members in 1945 to 185 today.

We therefore support enlargement of both the permanent and the non-permanent membership of the Security Council in order to respond to today's realities. The expansion must be broad enough to be representative of the present membership; it must also be balanced, based on equitable geographic criteria and most important, in accord with the criteria set out in Article 23 of the Charter.

As to working methods, the views of the general membership, as expressed through resolutions of the General Assembly, should be carefully taken into consideration by the Security Council, which acts, after all, on their behalf. We are encouraged by recent initiatives taken by the Security Council towards transparency and consultation with non-members of the Council. This process should be further strengthened and formalized to achieve full democratization.

Enlargement of the Security Council alone will not suffice. It must be accompanied by other necessary changes and reforms in order to enhance the Council's legitimacy and credibility and, more important, its effectiveness, as well as that of the United Nations in general. The issue of credibility is of cardinal importance. Without this credibility, all contemplated changes aimed at the strengthening of the Security Council will prove to be of no avail. The objective application of United Nations principles, without discrimination, is a *sine qua non*. We must remember that failure to uphold principles and international law in one situation sets a precedent for similar failure elsewhere, with often catastrophic consequences. My delegation has in the past suggested that adequate mechanisms and procedures should be set up to ensure compliance with mandatory Security Council decisions. This need is more evident now when we are reviewing the reform of the United Nations in general and of the Security Council in particular.

There are two additional issues that should be mentioned here. Within the context of recent discussions concerning the reform of the Security Council, justifiable concerns have been expressed regarding the use of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council, an issue that must be addressed seriously with a view to at least minimizing the use of the veto for the time being. The other is the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Council's future ability and effectiveness in addressing, containing and resolving conflict situations depend to a great extent on close cooperation with the General Assembly and on the consolidation of closer regional arrangements, acting in conformity with the United Nations Charter and with the full authorization of the Security Council.

The General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council has addressed all these issues diligently. Its meetings have been attended by an ever-increasing number of States, a clear sign that the work done has been substantial and relevant.

We must not be disheartened by the fact that, after so many meetings over a period of months, it was not possible for the Working Group to reach a consensus on all issues and that agreement on a formula for enlargement proved elusive. On the contrary, we must continue the deliberations diligently, purposefully and with perseverance. We must address all the issues, and consider all available suggestions and proposals — and there are many innovative, constructive and interesting ones already on the table — with a view to reaching appropriate and lasting solutions. For that to happen, we must seek and reach general agreement and consensus. In order to be effective, all changes must be seen by all to be rational, fair and democratic.

I would like to express deep appreciation to the Chairman, Mr. Amara Essy, and the two Vice-Chairmen of the General Assembly Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council for the work they carried out. Their leadership and guidance of the Group's work was exemplary.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that, above all, as I mentioned earlier, my delegation believes that reform of the Security Council and a change in its composition will be to no avail if we are not clear as to the proper functioning of the Security Council and other, related organs of the United Nations and their interrelationships; if we do not have adequate machinery for the implementation of decisions made by the Security Council; if we do not have an adequate and acceptable system of peace-keeping; if we do not use improved methods of peace-making and pacific settlement of disputes; and if we do not provide the United Nations with a solid financial basis to carry out all these functions.

In other words, we must bestow on future generations a reformed, rejuvenated and invigorated United Nations that is effective — one that they will be proud of and one whose performance will not periodically be called into question. If we fail this test and miss this opportunity, history will judge us harshly.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, allow me to join in extending appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Amara Essy, Chairman of the Open-ended Working group, and President of the forty-ninth General Assembly session, and to the Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein, Permanent Representative of Finland, and Ambassador Pibulsonggram, Permanent Representative of Thailand, for their tireless efforts and substantial contribution to the work of the Open-ended Working Group.

At all stages of consideration of the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase of the Membership of the Security Council, the delegation of the Republic of Belarus has proceeded from the need to resolve this issue in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and it has sought to contribute constructively to this process.

The problem of reforming the Security Council, for the purpose of adapting one of the main bodies of the United Nations to the changing circumstances and enhancing its efficiency, has become a priority issue for Member States during the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This subject provides a background for the effort to increase the benefits and improve the mechanism of the United Nations system as a whole.

In this context, the Republic of Belarus supports the efforts of countries which are seeking mutually acceptable approaches and a wider and more lasting consensus on the reorganization and review of the membership of the Security Council, one that is capable of ensuring international security and peace in all regions and thus promoting the aims of sustainable development.

The consideration of this issue in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group has revealed alternative approaches by delegations regarding the Security Council's membership: an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members; the principles, criteria and mechanism for their selection; the voting procedure — including the veto power; and the need to take measures and to adopt practices which would enhance the transparency and working methods of the Security Council.

Speaking from this rostrum, the delegation of Belarus would like to present its position in the context of the development of the negotiating process.

Our approach to a possible resolution of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council related matters is based upon the following elements: The important changes which have taken place in international relations, including a substantial increase in the number of United Nations Member States, presuppose the need to make the Security Council a more effective and larger organ. The enlargement of the Security Council should proceed with respect both to permanent and to non-permanent members. The expansion of the Security Council should be based upon the principle of equitable geographical distribution of States, elected by secret ballot by the General Assembly within the framework of the agreed distribution pattern among regional groups. New permanent members, as well as the five original permanent members, must bear a special political and financial responsibility — not only for maintaining international peace and security, but also for achieving the purposes of sustainable social and economic development. Any increase in the permanent membership should not affect chances for other States to be elected to the Security Council as non-permanent members. In the enlargement of the Council we should envisage the allocation of an additional non-permanent seat for each of the existing regional groups, including the Group of Eastern European States. Nomination for non-permanent seats by regional groups should be based upon interregional rotation and equitable geographical distribution. The two categories of Security Council members, as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, should be preserved. The veto power should not be extended to new permanent members; the veto power and other voting procedures of the Council should be given thorough consideration. Lastly, the reform of the Security Council should promote a better relationship between the Members of the Council and other United Nations Member States, and enhance transparency and efficiency in the Council's working methods, including democratization of its proceedings.

Regarding further activities of the Open-ended Working group at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, our delegation supports the proposals contained in document A/49/965 concerning the next stage of the negotiating process, with the aim of achieving tangible results at this session.

We should preserve the framework of negotiations adopted at the forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions, which provides for alternating official meetings of the Open-ended Working Group with open-ended unofficial consultations.

In conclusion, may I once again assure members of our delegation's readiness to make further contributions towards consolidating the consensus and seeking mutually acceptable solutions in order to create an effective and democratic Security Council.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): There is general agreement that the present membership of the Security Council should be enlarged to reflect the cultural diversity represented by the increase in the membership of the United Nations from 51 States in 1945 to 185 States today. What seems to present the most difficult proposition is the criteria for the inclusion of new members — which countries should become permanent members of the Security Council and if they should also have the veto power, whether permanent seats should be allocated on a regional and rotational basis or should be allocated to certain specified regional representatives, and how democratic and transparent the Security Council should be.

Another question is: by how much should the membership of the Security Council be increased in both categories? The answer to this particular question must of course take account of the fact that we have to be very careful not to expand the membership of the Council to the extent that it becomes a useless monstrosity unable to take decisions in a timely manner, if at all.

These are vexing questions which call for creative and immediate responses lest question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters remain a permanent feature on the agenda of the General Assembly. These questions also indicate that there is need for change in the way the Security Council functions. In attempting to address these questions, my delegation does not intend to depart or detract from the positions taken by the African Group or the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries. As a member of both Organizations we are bound by the decisions they have taken. We wish, however, to address a few issues of a general nature as our contribution to the ongoing debate on this agenda item.

The original mission of the Security Council, or the United Nations itself for that matter, was very simple: to prevent war or threats to the peace through persuasion, sanctions and collective military action when this became absolutely necessary. This was a good idea for the collective security of all nations, but it fell afoul of the national interests of the victorious Powers. They arrogated to themselves extraordinary powers which have ensured their dominance of international affairs for the last 50 years. But dominance is incompatible with democratic principles.

The reduction and the ultimate elimination of the privileges enjoyed by some States should be the starting point in any debate on Security Council reform. This may sound like an unrealistic proposition but we do not believe that the addition of new permanent members would make the Security Council more democratic than it is today. On the contrary, we would merely have increased the number of privileged Members of the United Nations and we would not have made the Security Council just or democratic. A truly democratic Security Council will come about when the principle of sovereign equality is fully established and respected in that body.

The division of the Security Council into permanent and non-permanent members makes horse trading a difficult and, at times, a frustrating process. Very often the non-permanent members find themselves adopting resolutions and decisions they did not quite fully participate in making. While it is appreciated that an attempt is made to reach decisions by consensus, the outcome is more often than not a foregone conclusion. Anyone can guess the outcome of a game of cards in which one side has all the aces. We believe that in the past the power of the veto was abused to protect the interests of the permanent members at the expense of the interests of the general membership of the United Nations and of the international community at large. This abuse paralysed the Security Council during the cold war years, to such an extent that the Council literally ceased to discharge its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security.

And there is more. Permanent membership in the Security Council does not only give those members the privilege of the use of the power of veto: permanent members of the Security Council also tend to become permanent members of the United Nations agencies and programmes and other bodies of the Organization. Some of them have served in these bodies of the United Nations continuously since they were established. This defeats the principles both of democracy and of rotation and gives the permanent members of the Security Council an undue advantage over the rest of the membership of the United Nations.

It is clear that the authors of the United Nations Charter never meant to make the Security Council a democratic organ — that we concede. The appointment of the five Powers as veto Powers and permanent members of the Security Council, and the privileged position they enjoy in the Council, attest to this fact. Therefore, increasing the number of the permanent seats by whatever percentage would not make the Security Council democratic. I do not know why we talk so much about democratizing the Security Council by adding more permanent members — which means more privileged members of that body. Any reform process that does not address the privileges enjoyed by the few Members of the United Nations or which seeks to perpetuate the status quo, or even enhance it or maybe make it worse, would be unacceptable to the majority of the membership of the Organization, which includes my own country, Botswana.

As for transparency in the working of the Council, we insist on it and always have. Those who are elected to the Council are not elected to go into hiding, making decisions which bind all of us behind closed doors. Yes, there is a place in the workings of the Council for informal consultations behind closed doors, but these must as often as possible culminate in meetings in which non-members can have the opportunity to participate.

Despite what I have said, Botswana supports the labours of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We believe the Working Group is doing a very important job which should not be rushed unnecessarily. The Working Group needs time to come up with the desired solutions to questions relating to Security Council reform, solutions that, hopefully, would make the Security Council a democratic organ of the United Nations — that is, if that is possible.

Mr. Nsanze Terence (Burundi) *(interpretation from French)*: My delegation is pleased to commend the trio that has presided over the Working Group: namely the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire and the Ambassadors of Finland and Thailand.

Our statement is based on two points — first, the genesis of the one-sided system within the Security Council, and, secondly, the need to synchronize democratization at the global and national levels. The best way to cure a disease is first to diagnose it, and the best approach to resolving problems is first to identify them. In accordance with this dual principle, my delegation will briefly refer to the genesis of the unequal — indeed, one-sided — system established within the Security Council.

Based on the fortunes of war, the major Allied Powers — the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom — consulted each other periodically on the political and military mechanisms to be decreed after the Second World War. Milestones towards a new international world order were successively put in place by conferences of the major Powers — in Tehran in December 1943, in Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, in the summer of 1944, in Yalta in February 1945, and in Potsdam later that same year, culminating at the conference establishing the United Nations, held in San Francisco in June 1945. During that period of reshaping geopolitics, the marginalization of the central Axis Powers in the international political arena was the priority objective, along with its equally important corollary: the monopolization of hegemony by the victorious Powers, which generously shared spheres of influence.

To safeguard this supremacy, these craftsmen had to forge an ad hoc instrument in the form of a veto, incorporated in Article 27 of the United Nations Charter, as the exclusive preserve of five States, by virtue of Article 23 of that same multilateral Treaty. The time when hegemonist motives prevailed is over. The lion's share that the five major Powers gave themselves, thus reducing the portion for the other States of the world, is out of place in today's world.

I now come to the second point: synchronization of democratization at the national and international levels. Urgent appeals and even exhortations have poured in from all quarters for the democratization of national institutions. Paradoxically, the enthusiasm of international circles for the establishment of democratic regimes in States contrasts strangely with their resistance, if not their allergy, to the democratization of the Security Council in particular and the world system in general. The Government of Burundi believes it would be better for the United Nations to emulate, through democratic reforms, the democratization of its individual Member States. Ideally, nations would be called upon to jump on the bandwagon of democratization within the United Nations. If the Organization cannot take the lead, it should at least determine to synchronize the democratization of its structure, functioning and methods with the wave of social and political changes that is sweeping through human society.

There are different, if not diametrically opposed, ideas about the projected reforms, which are contested by various parties. The delegation of Burundi will look at the four trends that have polarized opinion and then comment on each.

The following steps have been proposed: the simultaneous accession of Germany and Japan and three States from three geographic regions to the status of permanent members of the Security Council, a permanent seat being based on certain criteria, such as demographic weight, contribution to the United Nations system and support for and participation in peace-keeping — in brief, a possible regional and global role; maintenance of the status quo for the five permanent members, coupled with rotation for the others; and, lastly, equal treatment for all Member States in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

The Government of Burundi welcomes the happy fact that two States penalized in the wake of a world conflagration attributable to them are today being supported by those responsible for their fate then. Because of their fruitful cooperation with my country, and because they meet all the requirements for joining the club of permanent members of the Security Council, Germany and Japan may rely on Burundi's support.

But my delegation must in turn be able to rely on the opposition of Bonn and Tokyo to any kind of selective reform that could worsen the existing imbalance, rather than do away with it, thus jeopardizing the trend towards adapting the Security Council to the requirements and challenges of today's world and risking regression as regards its composition and operation.

A number of delegations praise criteria that would give them advantages, thus propelling them towards a permanent seat on the Security Council, criteria such as population, material and financial contributions and military contingents. Such criteria not being immutable, meeting them is subject to change. For example, a rising birth rate and its opposite, a declining birth rate, may invert the proportions, and contributions in the areas I have mentioned vary, because they depend on political will and economic causes and conditions.

Through a process of elimination we find that of certain theses advocated here one is fully in accord with the main thrust of the United Nations Charter in particular and with international law in general. By virtue of the sacrosanct principle of "sovereign equality", established and enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter, the prerogatives attached to a permanent seat should be exercised in their entirety by States members of the Security Council, whether members through rotation or permanent members.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It seems reasonable to us that, by relying on the legal standards enshrined in the Charter, which are invoked almost universally by the advocates of equitable representation in the Security Council, the Assembly could be spared unnecessary patch-up jobs, quick fixes and prognostications. In this context, a pragmatic, realistic and egalitarian formula should be sought in the sum total of national sovereignties, merged into a collective, or continental, sovereignty. This approach would give a voice to each of the political families that make up the world Organization and to all the Member States, through their regional representatives. The Rubicon could be crossed by sacrificing subjective and egocentric schemes to three new and distinct phenomena: the collapse of ideological blocs; the near-universal membership of the United Nations; and the closing of this century and the dawning of the third millennium, which will be characterized by different stakes and considerations from those that have dominated the international arena over the last 50 years.

In view of the foregoing analysis, we propose that sovereign equality be established on a regional scale and that, accordingly, permanent seats be allocated to all the continents according to their respective characteristics. Proceeding along these lines, it would remain to be decided whether there should be an equal number of permanent seats for all regions or whether the number should be determined on the basis of numerical inequalities. In this context, the question of the *raison d'être* of Europe's division into two separate regions would appear to be relevant, in the wake of the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the burying of the cold-war hatchet.

The merits and advantages of allocating permanent seats on a continental basis lie in the durability of such a procedure. Indeed, the criteria recommended by many delegations are variable, while continents are immutable. These variable criteria are subject to historical, human, demographic, political, economic, territorial and other changes.

An increase in the number of non-permanent seats is among the imperative changes to be effected within the Security Council. A dual balancing would thus take place: at the level of both the permanent and the non-permanent seats. The next step would be the distribution of new seats among the States of each geographical region. In any case, this practice has already been translated into fact within all the principal organs of the United Nations, and in particular within the Security Council itself.

In this scenario, the acquired rights of the five current permanent members would remain intact. Their cherished veto also would survive the restructuring of the Security Council. Nevertheless, the new permanent members also would have the right of veto, thus ending the monopoly of that right by its five current beneficiaries. Another, equally valid, option would be for all the permanent members to renounce recourse to the veto, or even the definitive abolition of that institution.

Reorganizing the Security Council in such a manner would not impinge in any way upon the common interests of Member States or on their adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The specific situation of Africa, more than that of any other continent, poses a challenge to the collective conscience of the international community. Indeed, the political configuration of the United Nations reveals a strange paradox: at a time when hotbeds of tension are concentrated in Africa, when poverty there is reaching record levels, and when natural and man-made disasters seem to be conspiring against that continent, which accounts for the largest number of refugees and displaced persons, international efforts are being deployed to reduce Africa to the status of a poor relation. Indeed, as we commemorate our Organization's golden jubilee, Africa is the only one of the five continents to be excluded from permanent representation on the Security Council. But Africa, threatened by dangers both from within and without, must assume a central role in deliberations related to peace, security and social and economic well-being.

Certain parties with clearly stated or skilfully disguised positions are working to minimize Africa's weight in missions of peace and security. Their arguments are based on nuclear arsenals, conventional weapons, and the number of military divisions — to use the Stalinist notion. But such an oversimplification ignores the other factors that determine the victory and reign of peace.

By assigning to themselves the task of policing the world and taking the predominant role within the United Nations system, the five major Powers used as a pretext the decisive role they played, thanks to their respective armadas, in the second global conflagration. But the role of Africa, which, however anonymously, had a major presence on all the battlefields, was just as decisive. A number of salient facts provide indisputable proof that events could have taken a different turn if Africa had not had such a broad and multifaceted commitment to the crusade in the Second World War.

First, the bravery of the African army in the two world wars earned it high praise from one of the most prestigious military leaders in history, General de Gaulle, in one of his memoirs. African troops often were assembled on the front lines and in the vanguard in order to shield, and even ensure the survival of, the European contingents.

Secondly, the entire African continent became the breadbasket and the milk cow for feeding the armies, which were fighting simultaneously on a number of fronts.

Thirdly, Africa's crucial strategic role, both militarily and politically, was recognized throughout the world. Our continent was transformed into a huge base, in which the Allied armies were concentrated, particularly the American and French armies. It served as a springboard for the Normandy landing in June 1944, as a sanctuary and headquarters for the French Resistance, and as the starting-point for worldwide victory, beginning in Brazzaville, where General de Gaulle traced the new map of the Earth, showing the contours of the new political panorama of France and its colonies.

The *coup de grâce* of the Second World War was delivered in the Far East by the atomic bomb, manufactured with uranium extracted in the heart of Africa, in the Congo — now Zaire — of which Burundi was at that time an integral part, from the administrative point of view.

Of course, we hasten to deplore the sad fact that this ore was used to bring such immeasurable tragedy to thousands of innocent victims.

In conclusion, it is clear from this brief historical outline that achievements in the search for peace and security are not the exclusive preserve of the economically developed or militarily over-armed States. Even when colonized Africa rivalled its former metropolises in the service of mankind. The Africa of today is all the more capable of participating through its permanent members in the Security Council in its Council's

> "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". (*Charter of the United Nations, Article 24*)

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The coming weeks will see the third anniversary of the work of the Open-ended Working Group. The delegation of Peru would like to stress the considerable progress achieved during this time, as we are convinced that, between the adoption of resolution 47/62 in 1992 and the second report before us today, noteworthy headway has been made on fundamental issues with regard to all the topics the Group has considered. This includes the fact that several initial reforms are now being implemented and continue to have a positive impact. I wish to emphasize our appreciation for the tirelessness, consistency and integrity of the work of the Vice-Chairmen. In this respect, the first report of the Working Group in 1994 and the solemn Declaration of 24 October indicate very clearly how far we have progressed and where we now stand.

This second report sets out the points on which there is some agreement among delegations to avoid excessive delays in negotiations and decisions. Thus, although it is true that a more in-depth consideration of the issues is needed because of the major differences that remain, we should not waste the opportunity afforded by the momentum of the anniversary and the obvious general interest being shown in the future of the United Nations. In our opinion, the Working Group is at a turning point. An excessively lengthy debate, without decisions, could erode its credibility. We believe there is a need to ensure the thematic and organizational continuity in the Group.

The report before us objectively reflects the limitations and possibilities we face and also expresses a tenuous but stimulating optimism based on the progress it has been possible to make so far. We all recognize the urgent need to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the Council, to enhance its representativity, and to improve the efficiency and transparency of its methods of work. We also agree that the Council should be expanded and, at the same time, that we should continue reviewing its methods of work. These are the consensual foundations that have been laid. They are fitting because their basic thrust is the idea of the common good and not just direct and immediate national interest. They also contain the ideal of a genuinely representative, democratic and legitimate Security Council. However, we must also point out that, in our opinion, the strengthening of the Council will not come to pass solely through an expansion of its membership, but through the nature of the decisions it adopts in the future and the extent to which they comply strictly with the law rather than bow to particular national interests.

In our opinion, the level of agreement that has been achieved in the Group would make it possible to conclude the pre-negotiation phase and begin the process of working out the details. We believe that both the existing categories of members should be expanded and, in view of the global scope of their responsibilities and influence, we feel that Japan and Germany should become permanent members.

We are not sure of the most suitable number of members, but we believe that the present ratio between the two categories should be maintained. We believe that it is essential to ensure proper representation for developing countries in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Charter. In that regard, whether or not national policies are consistent with the principles and standards of the Charter should be taken into account. We firmly believe that alongside major financial contributions, we must give thought to the qualitative and significant contributions both developed and developing countries have made to promoting the purposes of the Charter and that have helped the Organization to make headway in areas ranging from the law of the sea to the environment and international cooperation for development.

We also believe that rotation agreements could be implemented at the regional level within the category of non-permanent members, to ensure the participation of all States in the Security Council. We welcome the idea of periodically reviewing these questions. We agree with the ultimate goal of eliminating the veto, but we recognize that agreement among the powers is essential. We believe that both questions are linked on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, on the topic of decision-making, we favour a gradual and progressive approach, and would be receptive to ways and means of limiting or qualifying use of the veto.

Allow me to extend our appreciation to those countries, whether or not they are candidates for a permanent seat on the Council that distinguished themselves in the past 50 years by their positive contribution to the United Nations.

Mr. Karim (Bangladesh): My delegation would like to join previous speakers in congratulating and paying tribute to the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Amara Essy, and his two colleagues in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Thailand, on an excellent job in guiding the deliberations of the Working Group. We have every confidence that under the current President's leadership we will collectively be able to build upon the useful work done during the forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions of the General Assembly.

The Security Council is the executive arm of the United Nations and it is only natural that Member States should take the keenest interest in its restructuring and reform to make it more democratic and effective. Bangladesh's views on various aspects of the issue have been articulated on different occasions in the past. I will therefore be brief in my intervention.

The main object of our endeavour, as we see it, is to have a Council that is more attuned and responsive to present-day needs, realities and expectations. A consensual approach, in our view, is the best way to progress towards this goal. The reform aspect, which has been described as the soft option by some delegations, has already engendered a large measure of agreement. The need for closer interaction between the Council and the General Assembly, greater transparency and consultations with non-members, briefings by the

President of the Council and greater involvement of troop-contributing countries in the evolution of policy decisions has been recognized. Indeed, considerable progress has been made in these areas.

There is also clear consensus on the need to enlarge the Council to make it more representative of the present membership. This aspect is important because it is the Council's representativeness that gives its decisions legitimacy and force.

However, there are differences as to the exact size of increase to be achieved and — perhaps more acutely — on the nature or character of the expansion. One option is simply to expand the non-permanent category, as was done in the 1960s. Another suggestion is that the permanent ranks also should be added to. Yet another proposal would result in the creation of a separate category of semi-permanent seats, which, it is argued, would also afford more opportunities for smaller and medium-sized countries to serve as regular non-permanent members. It has also been suggested that the bar on the immediate re-election of non-permanent members be removed.

My delegation is prepared to look at all options with an open mind. Any step or measure conducive to a more effective and more efficient Council would have our support. There are two points, however, that I should like to stress. First, we expect that the concept of the sovereign equality of States will be a guiding principle in the reform and restructuring exercise. Secondly, it is the smaller and more vulnerable countries — a clear majority of Member States — that have the most vital stake in an effective Security Council and are most dependent on it. Their legitimate interests and perceptions should not be lost sight of.

Before concluding, I should like to make a brief comment about the veto. Reflecting, as it did, the military realities of 1945, the veto was designed as an essential safety-valve for the United Nations, to prevent confrontation between the Security Council's permanent members, which could destroy the Organization itself and could threaten international peace and security. It defined, in a sense, the limits of what the United Nations could do or could attempt to do. If its use stymied the United Nations during the cold war, it is arguable that it also ensured the survival of the Organization during the stresses and strains of that period.

Nowadays, of course, the veto is in disuse — and rightly so. It does, however, loom uncomfortably in the background. We should like to see its use defined or circumscribed by clear principles and criteria. This is a decision, however, that only the permanent members themselves can make. We hope and expect, though, that the views and concerns of other Member States will receive due consideration.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on Agenda item 47 and have thus completed this stage of our consideration of that item.

Agenda item 25

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/438)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.16)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.16.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Practically since the very beginning of independence, in the nineteenth century, Latin America has demonstrated a clear desire for development of the institutions of the region. We can say, without exaggerating, that in many cases the region has been an active pioneer in the promotion of an important multilateral dynamic. This is rooted in the collective effort that led to independence, and, consequently, it reflects an amphictyonic ideal of solidarity which has evolved through our history and has adapted to various changes and new realities.

I am referring not just to the Panama Congress or to the Pan American Union, which predates the United Nations, or to the Organization of American States or various regional arrangements which cover almost all the areas of relations between States in modern times. I am referring specifically to the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and especially to "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System", as draft resolution A/50/L.16 is entitled. By tradition, my delegation has the honour of introducing for the General Assembly's consideration the draft resolutions on this subject, on behalf of all members of SELA. We trust that this year's draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as has invariably happened in previous years in regard to similar draft resolutions.

I have indicated that the purpose of the draft resolution is to strengthen and extend the cooperation between the United Nations system and the Latin American Economic System. We believe that this could be a synergic link to deal with new as well as lingering problems affecting the region of Latin America and the Caribbean in the economic, financial and commercial fields, on which SELA works with great seriousness and enthusiasm.

I shall not refer to the enormous value of United Nations cooperation with the various regional arrangements at the present stage, but I should like to say that such understandings represent a trend that contributes to the creation of something which could be a most vigorous multilateral system in future.

Indeed, the dominant trends in the world economy reflected in the globalization of economic activities, as well as a growing interrelationship, go hand in hand with the consolidation of regional areas and spaces. This shows that it is imperative for the United Nations always to be in the vanguard of political as well as economic events. In this connection, the development of cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System could, in a way, be called a case-study or a test case.

For practical reasons, I shall not dwell unnecessarily on a description of the contents of the draft resolution, which delegations have before them. Actually, the text is similar to those of previous years, but it contains one important new element — one designed to ensure that this item will be considered biennially by the General Assembly, in line with United Nations efforts to rationalize its activities and to reduce costs.

Mr. Illueca (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Our colleague from Peru has given us an excellent introduction to draft resolution A/50/L.16, of which Panama is a sponsor and which we hope the General Assembly will adopt by consensus.

My delegation's statement on this item is in keeping with Panama's adherence to the goals of the Latin American Economic System (SELA). The Panama Convention establishing SELA was signed in my country's capital; ever since, we have considered it a regional creation, imbued with the spirit of Simón Bolívar and given a legitimate mandate to act for the attainment of its objectives so that its efforts and achievements can be counted among the successes of regional cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Since its creation, SELA has brought together a generation of highly intelligent individuals firmly committed to the region. These individuals have shown vigilance in ensuring that SELA's machinery works according to a timetable that, in many essential activities, is in step with the timetables of the various mechanisms of the United Nations and its system.

We are pleased here to salute the new Permanent Secretary of the Latin American Economic System, Mr. Carlos Moneta. His presence in SELA constitutes a validation of the assertion he made at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations:

> "Latin America and the Caribbean firmly intend to reaffirm their identity and diversity in the emerging new international order... Globalization and regionalism do not, in any way, mean accepting without any discussion one homogenizing model, but, rather, exploring valid alternatives where, with our own cultural identity, we can incorporate the valuable experience of our members with those of other parts of the world." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, pp. 74-75)*

I am also very pleased to welcome Ambassador Allan Wagner, the new Permanent Observer of the Latin American Economic System to the United Nations. His excellent reputation in diplomacy and in the economic and social spheres is well known.

My delegation is also very pleased that Ambassador Oscar de Rojas, who served so splendidly as SELA's Permanent Observer, has stayed on at the United Nations, placing his talent and enthusiasm at the service of his country, Venezuela, and, thus, of his region.

Having read the Secretary-General's report in document A/50/438 on the agenda item under consideration, we see that it reflects SELA's efforts to maintain relations with the United Nations and various bodies of its system that contribute to productive partnership in the economic, social and communications fields.

My delegation wishes to make special mention of SELA's preparations for and activities at the World Summit for Social Development, held in March this year in Copenhagen. Mr. Moneta was quite right when he said that:

> "As was reflected in the recent World Summit for Social Development, our countries must respond to a two-fold challenge to grow and modernize... and, at the same time, resolve the serious and potentially explosive social debt characterized by the considerable expansion of poverty and marginalization." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 74)*

SELA's very thoughtful work on that occasion led to concrete proposals. The soundness and relevance of these proposals must have an impact on the process of implementing in our region the Programme of Action adopted in Copenhagen.

In this regard, the current Permanent Secretary of SELA made the very pertinent assessment that, together with the adoption of effective measures of international cooperation aimed at fulfilling the commitments undertaken at the Social Summit:

> "'An Agenda for Development' represents an exceptional opportunity for the United Nations again to play its central role in articulating a global vision of international economic relations and world development." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 75)*

In this connection, it is encouraging to note the position of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, as stated last July by Ambassador Salvador Arriola, who distinguished himself as Permanent Secretary of SELA during the preparations for the twenty-first meeting of the Latin American Council. He pointed out that SELA, today as in the past, continues to accord

> "full validity to the objectives of the Panama Convention, which are consistent with the promotion of integration and regional cooperation and of a permanent system of consultation and coordination for the adoption of common positions and strategies on economic and social issues, both with international bodies and forums and with third countries and regional groupings".

My delegation wishes to make special reference to SELA's role in technical cooperation between developing countries. In playing this role, SELA deserves the gratitude of our Governments and encouragement from the United Nations. In this sphere of action, we attach special importance to measures aimed at intensifying the support of the United Nations Development Programme for the programmes of the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System in order to complement technical-assistance activities.

In the view of the delegation of Panama, SELA can continue to play a most valuable role in technical and economic cooperation between developing countries. We know that the United Nations has the will to strengthen South-South cooperation, and we hope for that will to crystallize and, with SELA's participation, be meaningfully implemented. Here I wish to reaffirm Panama's existing commitment to SELA.

Mr. de Rojas (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Again this year, we support the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System (SELA), by which the General Assembly would urge the United Nations system to continue and intensify its support for and cooperation in the activities of the Latin American Economic System. In this connection, we echo the words spoken earlier by the representatives of Peru and Panama, whom we thank for their statements.

As seen from the report of the Secretary-General on this item (A/50/438), cooperation between the two organizations in recent years has been extremely productive and dynamic, not only covering the traditional international economic issues such as trade, finance, external debt and technology, but also expanding into new areas important for the development dialogue, such as social issues, the environment, modernization of methods of production, administration and management, and so forth.

For Latin America and the Caribbean, SELA is an increasingly important tool for regional cooperation and consultation on issues of interest on the international economic agenda for giving concrete, practical support to ongoing efforts to promote regional integration and to ensure that our region has its rightful place in the new framework of international economic relations. This is reflected in the recent decision taken at the Quito meeting of Heads of State of the Rio Group to ask SELA for technical support to back up a series of initiatives proposed by the Group. Many such activities, to be sure, will take place in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

For countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, SELA provides special coordination on many of the items before the United Nations, as indicated by the fact that next January's regional preparatory meeting for the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development will, as in the past, be held under the auspices of SELA. Moreover, in recent years, SELA has consolidated its institutional presence here in New York; I myself have had the honour to be involved in this. This will unquestionably help strengthen cooperation, especially between the two secretariats, and also between States members of the two organizations.

Thus, it is clear that improved cooperation and coordination between SELA and the United Nations system is not only desirable, but essential. Particularly important for SELA, in view of its meagre resources, is the ability to continue to benefit from the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the series of projects and activities it has carried out. We wish also to thank the UNDP, in particular its Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean and its Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, for its assistance, and to echo paragraph 3 of the draft resolution we shall soon be adopting — by consensus I hope — in urging it to strengthen and expand its crucial support.

Mr. Sersale di Cerisano (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Argentina reiterates its support for cooperation between the United Nations system and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). We take this opportunity to welcome two new SELA officials: the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Carlos Moneta, and the Permanent Observer to the United Nations, Mr. Allan Wagner.

Argentina attaches great importance to regional mechanisms for consultation and policy coordination in active, dynamic multilateral economic diplomacy, to deal on an ongoing basis with items on the world agenda. We believe that the initial consultations on such items should always take place at the regional level; in that connection SELA is, and will continue to be, a priority forum for regional discussion and cooperation. This view is affirmed in paragraph 36 of the Declaration adopted by our Heads of State at the Ibero-American summit, held in October at Bariloche, Argentina.

We view regional policy consultation and coordination as a complement to international efforts. We countries that make use of this complementarity believe that each entity has its own advantages. In the case of SELA, it been most useful since its establishment not only as a regional complement to international efforts, but also to champion new topics of benefit to the region as a whole. This is not merely theoretical: it has been manifested concretely in the Second Committee's work on economic and financial issues, where SELA has been consulted on a number of items and has been of great assistance to all countries of the region.

For all these reasons, and because of Argentina's history of cooperation with SELA, we urge the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.16, which includes a new request to the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a report on cooperation betwen the United Nations and SELA. I believe that this gives the Secretary-General enough time to carry out an in-depth review and to further strengthen the cooperation between the two organizations.

Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Let me begin by congratulating the President of the General Assembly on the fine way in which he is guiding the work of this body.

The report of the Secretary-General on the item before us (A/50/438) provides a good summary of the level and degree of cooperation between the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). International cooperation for development is a central commitment of the United Nations, particularly with respect to developing countries and their regional and subregional bodies — in this case the Latin American Economic System. Yet it is not an area of activity that is well known by world public opinion beyond the small circle of experts and governmental authorities.

I am referring to technical cooperation with the Latin American Economic System (SELA) but I could also refer to the reports that the General Assembly will see in the next few days regarding the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of African Unity and other bodies for regional cooperation and coordination.

Regrettably, there is an error of perception with regard to one of the essential obligations of the United Nations. A careful study of the report of the Secretary-General will reveal the extent to which the United Nations does indeed cooperate, through its programmes, agencies and organs, with the Latin American Economic System. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean certainly want such technical cooperation to be increased and more intensified and would like to see the United Nations double or even triple its human and financial efforts in order to fulfil this obligation, which is inscribed in the Charter and in countless resolutions of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies.

It is understandable that our brothers and sisters in other developing regions of the world, such as those of Africa and Asia, should express the same wish. And this is as it should be. This is an area of shared concerns in the developing world and is linked with the present international situation and the basic economic expectations of our countries. In a world that is swiftly becoming more and more interdependent and globalized, the international agenda has a stronger and stronger impact on the setting of the various national and regional agendas, which makes it increasingly necessary to have cooperation between the United Nations system and the various countries, and regional and subregional bodies of the developing world — both South-South cooperation and cooperation with the developed North. The countries of the so-called third world must demand such cooperation time and again, however many times it may be necessary, whether with regard to the Latin American Economic System or any of the other regional organizations of the developing world, for this is an essential obligation of the United Nations, and if we do not make ourselves heard, the United Nations could lose sight of its very *raison d'être*.

We are not here solely to confront the political crises of our times. We are here also to make international cooperation for development one of the essential pillars of the daily work of the United Nations in respect of North-South and South-South relations.

I wish to emphasize this aspect of United Nations efforts for cooperation in relation to SELA and other regional and subregional bodies dealing with cooperation between developing countries, but I also believe it appropriate to mention the essential importance of the Latin American System for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. If we do not reinforce our capacity for joint negotiation, providing the proper structures through our regional and subregional bodies of consultation and coordination, we will lose some genuine opportunities for negotiation between our countries and the developed North. This logic, which led to the creation of SELA through the signing of the Panama Convention in 1975 is still valid, and its importance is being felt more acutely because of the new international realities of the end of the century. This is true not only in our region but also in the regional organizations of Africa and Asia.

On behalf of my country, Costa Rica, I should like to express full support for the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and, as former Permanent Deputy Secretary of SELA and on behalf of the authorities that have requested me to do so, I should like to thank the entire Assembly for its support of the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.16 and of document A/50/438 and Corr.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System".

With draft resolutions of this kind and with the implementation of necessary, effective international cooperation programmes for development in Latin America and the Caribbean and developing regions of Asia and Africa, we shall be able to give real shape to the letter and the spirit of commitments enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Florencio (Brazil): Brazil attaches great importance to the role played by the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in contributing effectively to the work of the United Nations. This cooperation has not been limited to the elaboration of documents relevant to the debates within this Organization; beyond that, SELA's role has been instrumental in the informal articulation, coordination and exchange of views between representatives of our region on issues related to development.

Brazil is grateful for the role played by SELA in the debates on "An Agenda for Development" and other development-related issues. In this context, I wish to stress our full support for the draft resolution that has been submitted. I also wish to thank SELA's former representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Oscar de Rojas, and to welcome his successor, Mr. Allan Wagner.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.16.

I should like to inform the Assembly that at the last session of the General Assembly, the draft resolution under this agenda item was adopted without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.16?

Draft resolution A/50/L.16 was adopted (resolution 50/14).

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 25?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 150

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Draft resolution (A/50/L.20)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.20.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): It gives me great pleasure to introduce the draft resolution on agenda item 150 entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". It is contained in document A/50/L.20.

Recent developments in contemporary international relations have shown increased involvement of national parliaments, as an essential component of the state structure, in shaping relations between peoples as well as in enhancing international and bilateral relations between States. In point of fact, the role of national parliaments in international affairs is no longer limited to ratifying treaties or approving financial contributions to international organizations. This role has been widened in scope to include international cooperation through collective work carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), their world organization, which shares the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

The fact that the membership of the IPU has increased to include 135 national parliaments is a clear reflection of its effective role in our contemporary world.

The diversity of IPU activities reveals the importance that its members attach to the subjects under consideration at the United Nations. The IPU has played a very positive and active role in supporting United Nations efforts in various parts of the world, in various conflicts and in the fields of disarmament, international humanitarian law, economic and social development, the environment and the advancement of women, as well as its important role in enhancing democracy. All of this of course serves as vivid testimony to its long-standing history of support of the United Nations.

The Declaration entitled, "The Parliamentary Vision for International Cooperation into the 21st Century", was adopted by the special session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 August to 1 September this year to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This Declaration gives a global parliamentarian overview on the major issues under consideration by the United Nations. In view of the importance of this document, my delegation, along with the delegation of Senegal, requested its distribution as an official document of the United Nations under several items, including the one now before us. It is now contained in document A/50/561 of October 1995.

In recognition of the further need to enhance the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, the Executive Committee of the IPU has decided to seek a closer relationship with the United Nations by concluding an agreement on cooperation between the two organizations. This decision was unanimously approved by the Inter-Parliamentary Council, which is composed of all members of the IPU and presided over by Mr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, the Speaker of the Egyptian People's Assembly, in his capacity as the current President of the IPU.

The Government of Senegal took the first step of requesting the inclusion of an additional item on this subject in the agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. This request was endorsed by Governments of the members of the Executive Committee and other members of the IPU, which proposed a draft resolution on this agenda item.

Following extensive open-ended informal consultations, a revised draft resolution that enjoys general agreement was achieved. This draft resolution is sponsored by 55 Member States and appears in document A/50/L.20.

In the preambular part of the draft resolution, the General Assembly considers that the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union complement and support the work of the United Nations. The Assembly expresses its desire to strengthen existing cooperation between the two organizations in a new and adequate framework.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, the Assembly requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to conclude an agreement on cooperation between the two organizations which should make provision for consultations, appropriate representation and cooperation, in general as well as in specific fields, and to report to the General Assembly at its next session.

In view of the delicate balance reflected in this draft resolution, which was achieved, as I said to a moment ago, through intensive open-ended consultations, I have the pleasure to purpose, on behalf of the co-sponsors, that this draft resolution be adopted by the Assembly by consensus.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I call on Mrs. Najma Heptulla, Deputy Chairperson of the Upper House of the Indian Parliament and Member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mrs. Heptulla (India): I stand here in support of the agenda item 150, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

Today, 107 years since the IPU was established, barely half a decade away from the dawn of the next millennium, and on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, it is important to appreciate that while major progresshas been achieved in all fields many tasks continue to demand our urgent attention. More than 2 billion people of the world still live in abject poverty and are unemployed; hunger and malnutrition afflict all countries, though in varying proportions. Sustained economic growth is necessary to ensure the eradication of numerous ills in our planet. Trade is the oxygen of economies. But cross-border trade between transnational corporations constitutes one third of world trade and almost 15 per cent of the global gross national product (GNP). No developing country or group of countries can match this commercial strength, augmented by enormous financial flows that can make or break a country's financial structure.

The relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union dates back to very establishment of this world Organization, in which the IPU played a very major role. From the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the 94th IPU Conference at Bucharest earlier this year, we learned with deep anguish about the financial crisis of this Organization, at a time when it is increasingly being called upon to undertake difficult tasks. We hope that this crisis, resulting from a cash-flow problem, will soon be overcome.

The United Nations is an organization of Member States, giving voice, and a forum, to the intergovernmental process. IPU, on the other hand, represents the divergent will of the people of the world, as expressed through their representatives in the national parliaments, belonging both to the ruling party and to the opposition. A cooperative relationship between the IPU and the United Nations has to be formalized so that the intergovernmental process can benefit from the experience of the elected representatives of the people.

I am happy to announce that the Government of India, having been convinced by the Indian Parliamentary Group, has cosponsored in the United Nations a draft resolution for this purpose, which the Assembly is now considering. It is my delegation's conviction that such a cooperative relationship would be truly reflective of the constant support of the Inter Parliamentary Union for all the programmes and activities of the United Nations. Bringing new ideas and firm support to the ideals and precepts of democracy, such a relationship would also contribute to the democratization, restructuring, revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations itself.

Among the tasks before the United Nations and the IPU today are the regulation of the international economy, transformed by the global movement of trade, capital and labour; the opening up of political systems, with democracy being the norm in national governance; the combating of the scourges of narcotics, arms trafficking, crime and terrorism, which seem to have replaced the scourges of war; the alarming population growth; the glaring disparity between men and women; environmental degradation; and peace and disarmament.

Since its inception half a century ago, the United Nations has been undertaking the task of establishing world peace by promoting disarmament. It has been seeking to establish economic parity, the fair distribution of resources and the capacity to harness natural resources through its specialized agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It has been seeking also to usher in a healthy generation through the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as attempting to combat, through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the unchecked growth of population.

The United Nations has consistently addressed the issue of the empowerment of women. From two decades ago, in Mexico, to this year, in Beijing, it has called upon the nations of the world to give neglected and exploited half of humanity the status of equal partner in all walks of life. Conscious of the necessity of protecting the environment of the planet, the United Nations has been fervently taking up the cause of environmental protection.

We at the IPU have always supported these steps. We have recognized the responsibility of parliaments in solving global issues. Under several of its agenda items, the IPU in successive years has taken up problems relating to disarmament, global peace, social development, environment, population control and, above all, the parity between men and women. In fact, the IPU supporting the call of the United Nations, in the past five years, organized four specialized conferences: on the environment, in Brazil; on population, in Cairo; on social development, in Copenhagen; and on women, in Beijing. Delhi, in February 1997, will host the IPU conference on the parity between men and women in decision-making, as a follow-up to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, concluded at Beijing.

The United Nations is the representative body of the executive wing of the Governments of the States of the world. The IPU is the representative body of the legislative wing of the States of the world. Just as in any successful State both the executive wing and the legislative wing have to work in close cooperation, at the international level also there should be close cooperation between these executive and legislative bodies, the United Nations and the IPU. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, through the parliamentarians, can play a major role in disseminating to the grass-roots level awareness of the activities and achievements of the United Nations. It is, then from the grass-roots level that the United Nations could draw its strength and inspiration, and take the lead in the process of development through the participation of peoples — so emphatically highlighted in successive Human Development Reports.

The IPU meets twice a year and discusses global issues, which, by their very nature, are also the issues before the United Nations. Working in close cooperation with the IPU and giving it intergovernmental status can fulfil the vision of a global democracy that the United Nations has always espoused and nurtured.

In my capacity as a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I have always stressed the essential similarity in approach, the convergence of actions and, most important, the perfect congruence of the objectives of the IPU and the United Nations. What more can be said for a gainful collaborative relationship between the two? I am convinced that it befalls us as representatives of our parliaments and our people in the IPU, and as representatives of our Governments and nations in this Assembly, to commence today a process that would culminate in the construction of a new society based on justice and fair play, on equity and compassion, and on equality and dignity for all. We owe it not only to ourselves but to coming generations to be successful in this task. Let us therefore join hands in this noble endeavour.

I seek the Assembly's indulgence in supporting this agenda item.

Programme of work

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice President, in the Chair.

The Acting President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the programme of work of the General Assembly.

I wish to inform members that sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 16, dealing, respectively, with the election of twenty-nine members of the Governing Council, of the United Nations Environment Programme and twelve members of the World Food Council as well as sub-item (f) of agenda item 17, concerning the appointment of seven members of the Committee on Conferences, will be taken up on Tuesday, 21 November, in the morning. That same morning, as already announced, the Assembly will also consider agenda item 152, "Review of the role of the Trusteeship Council", and agenda item 38, "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

I should also like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 20, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance".

I have been requested by Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa of Austria, who is Coordinator of the informal consultations on draft resolutions on agenda item 20, to inform delegations intending to submit draft resolutions under this item to do so by the target date of Friday, 24 November. However, may I add that it would be useful to submit draft resolutions as soon as possible to allow time for further negotiations, with a view to reaching consensus on the draft resolutions.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.61

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

61st plenary meeting
Wednesday, 15 November 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Abibi (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 150 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Draft resolution A/50/L.20

Mr. Sitaula (Nepal): The world has witnessed the rapid expansion of representative democracy all over the world in the past few years. While this world-wide surge for democracy is a welcome development for parliamentarians like us, the greatest challenge facing us today is how to sustain this democratic process. The arrival of democracy has been accompanied by the soaring expectations of the people, who are the underpinnings of a democratic society. But the necessary institutions, mechanisms, resources and capabilities at the disposal of many States are awfully inadequate to meet the emerging aspirations of their peoples.

As direct representatives of the people, it is the role of parliamentarians not only to articulate and interpret these aspirations and formulate policies in the shape of laws keeping in view these practical difficulties, but also to goad governments to implement them. In other words, their role is both to uphold the ideals that nurture and sustain democracy and to act as a link between the State and the people. This is indeed a daunting task. Continued contacts with fellow parliamentarians and with organizations such as the United Nations help to deepen their commitment to democratic ideals and their understanding of the problems involved worldwide.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is an international organization of national parliaments. It offers a venue for the parliamentarians of 135 countries, including my own, to get together and exchange information as well as share experiences with one another. IPU has remained dedicated all these years to democratization and to the promotion and establishment of democratic institutions in countries where representative democracies are in their infancy. Its contribution to disseminating information about the importance of free and fair elections, the participation of women and men as equal partners in social, economic and political life, and the protection and promotion of human rights and individual freedom has undoubtedly been singular. Since both IPU and the United Nations stand to serve ideals which are very similar in character and purpose, and since their activities are mutually reinforcing, it is important that cooperation between these two organizations be institutionalized and strengthened.

Nepal appreciates the efforts undertaken so far by these two organizations to foster closer links with a view to further enhancing the process of the consolidation of nascent democracies in many countries of the world. Nepal, therefore, welcomes and supports the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.20, which

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to conclude an agreement on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU containing provisions for regular consultation and cooperation. Such cooperation, in our view, will pave the way for launching, *inter alia*, joint programmes and the exchange of information and documentation. It will also facilitate the IPU's participation in other organs of the United Nations, its programmes, funds and specialized agencies and even United Nations-sponsored international conferences.

In my own country, Nepal, where the restoration of democracy was made possible by the sacrifices of the people, we have been busy strengthening the democratization process through two general elections in the course of the last five years. We have initiated numerous plans and programmes with the express intention of consolidating democracy in the country. We are convinced that a strong institutional framework that addresses the issues of development is indispensable for democracy, as we have seen that weak economies only manage to sustain democracy at a very high cost. As a land-locked least developed country, we have faced scores of challenges in our efforts to consolidate democracy. Without democracy, peace and development are not possible, and without development, peace and democracy cannot be enduring. Our first and foremost preoccupation, therefore, has been to strive for the promotion of socio-economic development within a human rights-oriented democratic framework. In our view, democratic ideals cannot be truly sustained where millions of people continue to live in conditions of absolute poverty and hunger and where easy access to food, health care, education, shelter and a clean environment is still a distant dream.

Nepal believes that the task of upholding democracy also requires the consolidation of democratic institutions and the promotion of democratic cultures. Free and fair periodic elections, an independent judiciary, respect for human rights and freedom of the press are, among others, the vital ingredients that constitute democracy. The United Nations and its specialized agencies have, all along, played catalytic roles in the development and growth of democratic institutions. Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is, therefore, crucial in helping national parliaments and parliamentarians deploy their efforts to address the problems of socio-economic development and democratic institution-building effectively. We also recognize that national Parliaments and national Governments themselves have to play primary roles in these areas. However, the task of meeting the challenges of democratization will be easier if their efforts towards social and economic development and poverty eradication are backed by the cooperation of the international community and the United Nations.

Mr. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): As I take the floor on agenda item 150 of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, entitled 'Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union', I should like to say that it is no mere chance that the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a youthful institution that goes back 106 years, has come forward to meet the United Nations as it celebrates its fiftieth anniversary.

Created in 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in the phrase of our Secretary-General, was a "pioneer and a precursor". It was the first permanent forum for dialogue between representatives of democratic States and, in a sense, it is no doubt the first institution to have envisaged the democratic imperative as part of the international legal order.

Why, then, is this meeting only now taking place? In fact, over the years, parliamentarians have engaged in many activities within the United Nations, but outside the meetings of the General Assembly.

However, the relevance of this initiative lies in its newness and its content. Having dealt with the first point, I should like to turn to the other.

Burkina Faso, along with 134 other countries, is a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. At the Union's last meeting the President of Burkina Faso's People's Assembly of Deputies was elected to a vice-presidency, along with representatives of Tunisia, Zambia, the Republic of Korea, India, Argentina, Venezuela, Hungary, Slovenia, Iceland, Italy and Sweden, with Egypt occupying the presidency.

The United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union share principles and objectives and, therefore, areas of interest and activity. In this respect, the promotion of peace and international cooperation might require more frequent consultations between the two organizations, leading to the joint coordination of certain activities and mutual assistance.

The special nature of the Inter-Parliamentary Union should make possible a special relationship with the United Nations: the two bodies could, at the international level, constitute a link between Governments and

Parliaments. If there is to be a fruitful relationship, we should envisage a proper framework for strengthening and maximizing cooperation through participation.

In conclusion, I should like to say that I have no doubt that in this endeavour the United Nations will do what is necessary.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Parliaments are fundamental institutions in the political life of States. They channel the participation of the people into the Governments of nations. Beyond the strictly national framework, Parliaments also take an interest in international affairs and participate in them in a variety of ways, one of which — a particularly important one — is involvement in the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is a singular institution in international life, being the world organization in which, for more than a century, national Parliaments have come together to engage in dialogue. We cannot ignore its existence and ever more intensive and varied activities at the present stage of the renewal of the United Nations.

Multilateral diplomacy, which has also been called parliamentary diplomacy, borrows from the parliamentary tradition procedures, rules, terminology and ways of thinking and acting that show democracy in operation. Disagreement, in the framework of the principles of freedom of opinion and expression and respect for the ideas and viewpoints of others, has endowed international relations with a democratic component *par excellence*. It is in that context that the United Nations was created, and has developed, as a forum for dialogue and a centre for worldwide cooperation.

Multilateral diplomacy — an instrument of international relations in a world society that we hope will become ever more open, egalitarian and democratic — should also take very much into account the voice of the Parliaments of States, which are the embodiment of popular representation.

In the light of this parallelism between parliamentary life at the national level and the discussion of matters of global interest in the forum of the United Nations, it must be clear that there is already contact and cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The importance of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union was recently highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (A/50/332) entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" which says:

> "IPU is a particularly relevant partner of the United Nations in this regard. Since its inception, in 1889, IPU has been active in the field of democratization, promoting the establishment of representative institutions, free and fair elections, the participation of women in political life, the representation of minorities and the defence of human rights." *(A/50/332, para. 85)*

In the final Declaration adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 1 September 1995, in this very General Assembly Hall, as part of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Union undertook to do its part in the task of making the ideal of the United Nations a reality. The Union also took on the commitment to help demonstrate that the United Nations could succeed in overcoming the challenges facing peoples on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

Also on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, my country's Congress of Deputies, adopted, at its plenary meeting of 24 October 1995, a resolution entitled "New challenges and institutional reform of the United Nations". That resolution refers, among other things, precisely to the prospects for cooperation that are opening up for the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, emphasizing the desirability of the Union's giving the United Nations the necessary political support in areas such as the consolidation of democracy, human rights and peace-keeping.

Dialogue and cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union already exist, but, in the judgement of my delegation, they need to be systematized, institutionalized and strengthened.

My delegation, as one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.20, which was introduced by the representative of Egypt, believes that by adopting this text we will be taking a major step forward in improving the fruitful relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. For the United Nations, it would undoubtedly be very useful to have stronger ties of dialogue and cooperation with the organization that brings national Parliaments together, while the Inter-Parliamentary Union would be able to develop its activities, in coordination with the work of the United Nations in areas of common interest.

This cooperation could take a variety of forms, among which we might emphasize the promotion of democracy, electoral assistance, the protection of human rights and encouraging the economic and social development of peoples.

The time would therefore appear to be ripe for better mutual awareness and greater cooperation and interaction between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to emerge from the current understanding between the two organizations. We feel certain that this draft resolution will open the way to that strengthened cooperation between the two institutions and therefore recommend it to the General Assembly, which we hope will adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Cissé (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): I wish to say at the outset that the Senegalese delegation fully supports the statement made this morning on behalf of all the sponsors, Senegal among them, by the representative of Egypt in introduction of the draft resolution before our Assembly.

In adopting the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", we will assuredly be acting to strengthen international cooperation and human solidarity, of which my country, Senegal, is an ardent supporter.

Founded more than a century ago, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as a world organization of national parliaments, was the first permanent forum for multilateral political negotiation. It has made an invaluable contribution to the rise of representative democracy throughout the world. At a time when the drive towards democratization is becoming increasingly essential to peace and development, it is fortunate that the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is in the vanguard of the struggle for the democratic ideal, is establishing a special relationship with the United Nations.

We should not forget that the United Nations was established half a century ago on the vision of a world which, according to the very language of its Charter, is based on the ideals of democracy: peace, freedom, justice and economic and social advancement. Very fortunately, for some years now the consolidation of democracy has become one of the main tasks of the United Nations as it fulfils its various missions in the service of maintaining peace and promoting sustainable development.

That is why we are convinced that, in setting up an innovative and functional framework for cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the draft resolution before us gives us the means to establish fruitful dialogue with representatives of our parliaments as institutions of state power. We are aware of their basic role in implementing decisions we take in this forum.

At a time when the United Nations is launching a vast reform process aimed at greater democratization in the work of its main organs and a better reflection of the objectives of economic and social development, it is fortunate that we can establish a closer relationship with the representatives of our Assemblies.

The draft resolution, whose adoption we commend, gives the Secretary-General a mandate — as my Egyptian colleague recalled this morning — to define a new and appropriate framework which, we hope, will break new ground in establishing a dynamic framework commensurate with the potential fruitful cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The cooperation framework should extend not only to questions of consultation and coordination, but also to the granting of a status allowing for the effective representation and participation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in appropriate forms, in the activities of the various United Nations bodies and for the forging of closer cooperation between the two organizations in areas of common interest, particularly those in which the Inter-Parliamentary Union has acquired recognized competence: representative democracy, human rights, the status of women and sustainable development.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution before us, Italy wishes to voice its strong and convinced support for this document, which sets an appropriate and long-needed framework for increasing cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We are especially grateful to the Permanent Representative of Egypt, Mr. Nabil Elaraby, for his clear, comprehensive and thoughtful introduction of the draft resolution. We are confident that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is an organization of national parliaments. Currently, it has 135 members belonging to every geographical region of the world. Parliaments are the highest expression of the ideals of democracy within the structure of a State. Parliaments represent the people and their will is the will of the people. Parliaments are called on to perform fundamental tasks not only in the domestic domain, but also in international matters. They adopt laws and exercise control over Governments. They authorize the ratification of treaties, implement international law and determine state policy on international organizations. Today, in a world where States are more interdependent than independent, parliaments are called on to play an unprecedented role in international cooperation.

Since its establishment more than a century ago, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has greatly contributed to international cooperation. Its action has been aimed at various objectives — in particular, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the attainment of democracy and the safeguarding of human rights throughout the world. It has promoted free elections and democratic institutions, fostered the participation of women in political life and supported the protection of minorities. In other words, the Union has constantly worked to affirm the ideals and pursue the goals of modern international society.

Therefore, it is quite appropriate — it is natural, to repeat the words recently used by the Secretary-General — that the Inter-Parliamentary Union should today be in the front line of the struggle being waged by international institutions to meet the new aspirations to freedom and democracy that are rising in so many peoples and so many nations.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has called the Inter-Parliamentary Union a privileged partner of the United Nations in the effort to assert democratization in activities concerning both peace and development. We share this view, and we believe that to fully develop this partnership, an adequate basis should be provided in accordance with the terms of the draft resolution that we are considering this afternoon. The strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union will be highly beneficial to both institutions. But more than anything else, it will greatly contribute to reaffirming and implementing, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, the purposes and principles enshrined in our Charter.

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The General Assembly has often been compared to a world parliament, on the basis of the characteristics shared by national parliamentary bodies: the representative nature of their members, and their treatment of the topics most important to their societies through debate and legislative action. And many of those characteristics are indeed to be found in the work of the General Assembly.

Without trying to equate two organs belonging to essentially different political systems, we cannot fail to ponder the implications of the expression "global parliament" during this very special year, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Friday, 1 September 1995 saw the close of a special session of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, opened at United Nations Headquarters by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and marking the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. On that occasion, the IPU Council adopted a declaration entitled "Parliamentary vision for international cooperation into the twenty-first century", which contained a serious and important analysis of the challenges the United Nations will face in the coming millennium: problems of international peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and democracy, as well as the various options for increasing the dynamism of international cooperation in its many forms. It is the Member States that must meet these challenges faced by the United Nations.

The parliament, for its part, is one of the basic elements of the power of the State. Parliamentary decisions cover nearly every area of government; they often relate to international relations and are sometimes directly linked to the work of the United Nations.

Greater cooperation between these parliamentary institutions and the United Nations would make it possible for parliamentary decisions to bolster the activities of the Organization, thus making possible broad representation of States in the work of the United Nations. Greater cooperation here would make it possible for many of these challenges — democracy and human rights, integration, development, international cooperation, and administrative matters such as the financing of the activities of the United Nations — to be faced in optimal conditions and for there to be fluid channels of communication between the United Nations and national parliamentary bodies.

In its foreign policy, Uruguay follows what we choose to call a "State foreign policy", which means continuous, ongoing communication between the executive and legislative branches, so that our international activities will enjoy the broadest possible support of our national representatives.

For all these reasons, Uruguay is among the sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.20.

Democratization of the United Nations is and must be the pole-star of the reform of the Organization, as repeatedly stated both by delegations and by the Secretary-General himself. Uruguay supports the draft resolution, as it is consistent with those purposes. The usefulness of strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an organization possessing the broadest representation, is consistent with this position. The activities of the Union complement to some extent those of the United Nations.

We are still celebrating the Organization's first 50 years. As the IPU declaration put it, we are propelling ourselves towards the twenty-first century. The parliaments of Member States are striving to fulfil basic principles that no one challenges today, principles that the peoples of the United Nations proudly proclaimed in their Charter.

More than ever before, we must hold fast to those principles now in these difficult times for the Organization as the orientation of any reform we might attempt. Democracy has always meant equality: equality of rights and of obligations for all Member States.

Mr. Larraín (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a signal honour for the Chilean delegation to co-sponsor the draft resolution on institutionalizing cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We decided to do so because Chile firmly believes in the value of democracy as a cornerstone of peace and international coexistence, and a parliament is the very essence of any democratic regime.

The promotion of democracy is one of the principal goals of the United Nations, which sees it as the foundation of peace, security and development for peoples. Hence, the establishment of a cooperation agreement between the two organizations is a natural step.

National Parliaments that gave life to the United Nations when they adopted the Charter, thus making its objectives of peace and cooperation the domestic law of the Member countries.

Today the United Nations is an international forum not just of sovereign States, but, increasingly, open to non-governmental organizations and all other forms in which civil society is represented. In this context, the Inter-Parliamentary Union should also have a special channel for participation in the work of the United Nations. This is consistent with the fact that it is an institution representing the Parliaments of the world, which, in turn, have the particular characteristic of embodying constitutionally the powers of the State.

There are diverse areas in which this cooperation can take shape. Listing them would touch on virtually every aspect of United Nations activities, but there is one that is far too large to summarize: the promotion of the democratic ideal.

For all of these reasons, my delegation trusts that the General Assembly will today adopt the draft resolution before it, as a way of reaffirming, in this United Nations fiftieth-anniversary year, its adherence to the cause of democracy in the world.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea, as one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.20, is very pleased to take part in today's discussion of agenda item 150, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". My delegation firmly believes that the enhancement of such a cooperative relationship will have a salutary effect on the future of the United Nations.

The goals of the United Nations can be fulfilled only when the people of the world actively participate in global efforts to achieve peace and stability with a sense of commitment and dedication. The activities of the world Organization should therefore be reinforced not only by the political will and opinions of Governments, but also by those of individual citizens. In order to create a closer link between the general public and the United Nations, the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as reflected in draft resolution A/50/L.20, should be supported and encouraged without reservation.

As an organization representing the people of the world, the IPU has been a tireless peacemaker and advocate of the peaceful settlement of international disputes. It has a crucial role to play in advancing the goals of the United Nations, particularly because its members bring their vast experience and expertise to the task of promoting the globalization of democracy. Democratization is now an essential tool for strengthening the activities of the United Nations in the service of the international community.

The IPU, as an inter-State organization, also plays a vital role in strengthening cooperation and understanding between States, thereby contributing to world peace. In view of the current trends of extremist nationalism and isolationism, which regrettably have resurfaced in some parts of the world, the IPU should take a leading role in renewing the international community's commitment to multilateral cooperation. The IPU could also make valuable contributions through promoting human contacts between members of various Parliaments and uniting them in pursuit of the common aspirations of international peace and prosperity, as embodied in the United Nations Charter.

It is well known that the IPU is instrumental in carrying out the work of the United Nations and implementing international commitments at the national level through its legislative activities. National Parliaments are an essential vehicle for ratifying international conventions and agreements, adopting laws which implement the decisions of States taken at the international level, monitoring governmental actions and approving State budgets, which has to do with contributions to international organizations such as the United Nations.

Through such actions, the political support of States can be extended to the United Nations in all fields, including peace-keeping and peace-building operations. Moreover, action taken by Parliaments is crucial to the enhancement of public awareness of the noble goals and principles which the United Nations pursues and in forging popular support for the United Nations. Given that closer cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU would significantly facilitate and mutually reinforce the work of both bodies, we hope that the forthcoming cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU will contain provisions for consultation, active participation by the IPU in the political work of the United Nations and increasing cooperation between the two bodies in the fields of representative democracy, human rights, the status of women and sustainable development, where the IPU has been able to develop its expertise and excellence.

It is for these reasons that the Republic of Korea fully supports the development of a new framework for cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU as reflected in draft resolution A/50/L.20, and the adoption of the draft resolution without a vote. We believe that the draft resolution is consistent with the common efforts of the global community to reinvent the United Nations so that it can better meet the opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mrs. Boukchina (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): It is a great pleasure for me to speak today on the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

The institutionalization of the links between our universal Organization and the organization that represents the elected leaders of the various peoples of the world is, first and foremost, a tribute to a prestigious institution created more than a century ago. It has not only gone through the upheavals of our time, but has also, above all, consolidated its foundations and increased its influence by bringing together representatives of the elected leaders of almost all States Members the United Nations. Institutionalizing the relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is a recognition of the role that that institution, through elected leaders of peoples, can play in promoting the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations, bringing nations together, increasing understanding between people and consolidating democracy at the State level.

The cooperation that we hope will be established between the two organizations, can only be beneficial and serve the interests of our nations. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, with its representative and democratic vocation, will thus bring a new viewpoint to the activities of our Organization, enrich our discussions and broaden the horizons of world thinking within the United Nations system.

In that regard, I should like to refer to a statement by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali on the occasion of the special session of IPU's Inter-Parliamentary Council held in New York on 30 August 1995.

In his address, Secretary-General appealed for the establishment of special relations and a partnership between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union so that IPU could be more closely associated with the United Nations action. The Secretary-General went on to say:

> "You are a vital element in the representation of the world, and it is therefore important that you play

> your full part within the world Organization." *(SG/SM/5711)*

The revitalized cooperation called for by the Secretary-General is particularly desirable because it will enable the United Nations to perceive the problems and concerns of the peoples of our planet and their aspirations for sustainable development centred on human beings through a new vision, that of parliamentarians.

I would like to stress that the relations to be established between our universal Organization and the Inter-Parliamentary Union as a representative organization are consonant with the reforms now being undertaken by the United Nations with the aim *inter alia* of achieving better transparency and greater efficiency.

The close links that the United Nations wishes to establish with other institutions such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union would involve these bodies in a more specific way in development activities conducted by the United Nations system.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, whose members come from the five continents, with all the cultural and human wealth that this implies, and which represents peoples that belong to the South and the North, will undoubtedly make an active contribution to the revival of international cooperation.

Mr. Matuszewski (Poland): In expressing my delegation's support for the draft resolution on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", I should like to point out that adoption of that draft resolution by the General Assembly would be particularly meaningful in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Since the parliamentary system is the cornerstone of democracy, deepening of the cooperation between the United Nations and IPU would certainly prove instrumental in the fulfilment of the principal objectives of our Organization.

My delegation is convinced that the Inter-Parliamentary Union should assume an adequate role within the United Nations system. Widening the possibilities for the mutual expression of opinions in forums of the United Nations — the world Organization of Governments — and the Inter-Parliamentary Union — the world organization of parliaments — would serve primarily to assist the circulation of ideas between them as well as contribute to a better understanding of changes occurring in different countries and regions.

Relations between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union should be based not only on the principles and objectives shared by the two organizations, but also on the awareness that programmes of the United Nations could hardly be effectively realized without the full support and understanding of the parliaments of United Nations Member States.

We believe that, especially in the light of the noticeable development of representative institutions, there is a need to create adequate foundations for the improvement of cooperation between representatives of parliaments and Governments. The framework of such cooperation should enable them to exchange information on their activities, and it should also provide for mutual consultations as well as cooperation in the realization of concrete programmes.

The scope of the possible cooperation between the two organizations may in particular cover the areas that constitute the focus of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's activities, such as representative democracy, human rights, the status of women, and sustainable development.

We believe that specific activities of the two organizations aimed at the promotion of peace and international cooperation could be coordinated through consultations conducted more frequently, including participation by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the discussions at various United Nations conferences and meetings. We also think that in order to facilitate their cooperation, provision should be made for the appropriate exchange of information and documentation between the two organizations.

In closing, I should like to express once again the Polish delegation's approval of the idea of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. For that reason, it has joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, whose aim is to provide the Secretary-General with a mandate to work out and conclude an agreement that would create a new and needed framework for cooperation between the two organizations.

Poland remains convinced that a closer relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union would be beneficial to both organizations. It would help them to fulfil their goals, to provide countries which are in the process of constructing or reconstructing their political systems with an additional opportunity to examine the experience of parliamentary democracies, and to make the latter more aware of the problems, needs and aspirations of their partners.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: We have just heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform you that since it was introduced the following countries have asked to have their names added to the list of sponsors of resolution A/50/L.20: Argentina, Benin, Cyprus, Nepal, Nicaragua, Panama and Vanuatu.

Ms. Fertekligil (Turkey) *(interpretation from French)*: I would like Turkey's name to be added to the list of co-sponsors of this draft resolution. I made that request before we discussed the item in the Assembly.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): I just would like to announce that, before we introduced the draft resolution, we were informed that Croatia, Gabon, Ireland and Turkey had already become co-sponsors of this draft resolution in addition to those just mentioned.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.20.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.20?

Draft resolution A/50/L.20 was adopted (resolution 50/15).

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 150?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I wish to make an announcement concerning the programme of work of the General Assembly.

I should like to inform members that agenda item 46, "Assistance in mine clearance" scheduled for Wednesday, 22 November, in the morning, will now be considered on Wednesday, 6 December, in the afternoon.

On Wednesday, 6 December, in the morning, the Assembly will take up agenda item 18, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples", the reports of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), and, as already announced, agenda item 21, "University for Peace".

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.